井上堅二
Kenji Inoue
バカとテストと召喚獣
12.5
ファミ通文庫

Novel Illustrations

IT'S THIS SEASON AGAIN.
THAT I FEEL THAT IT'S GREAT THAT WE WON THE SUM-MONING WAR.
YEAH, WE MIGHT FREEZE TO DEATH IN THAT F CLASS-ROOM ANYWAY.
...
YEAH.
吉井明久
Akihisa Yoshii
バカとテスト召喚獣 12-5
THE YEAR'S COMING TO AN END, ISN'T IT?
December
12
16
ぴっ
YES.
AS FOR WHAT'S LEFT...
島田美波
Minami Shimada

HIMEJI
I THINK IT'S BETTER IF YOU DON'T MENTION THAT TERM SO CASUALLY.
IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR CHRISTMAS, ISN'T IT?
カーン
坂本雄二
Yuuji Sakamoto
姫路瑞希
Mizuki Himeji

SO WHAT ABOUT CHRIST-MAS!?
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US BUDDHIST!
IT'S JUST A DAY FOR HUNTING DOWN COUPLES, THAT'S ALL!!
YOU GUYS...
木下秀吉
Hideyoshi Kinoshita
うおおおおお
BUT CHRIST-MAS
はは…
ちらっ
WELL

SHIMADA
MIND DIRECTING THESE WORDS TO THIS GIRL HERE!?
UU...
I
I KNOW THAT...
YOU CAN'T, MIZUKI. GOING OUT WITH THE OTHER GENDER AT THIS TIME.
RIGHT NOW, IT'S CONSIDERED BREAKING THE RULES.
...I CAN'T HEAR YOU.
まりゅっ
AHAHA
I'VE ALREADY DECIDED.
WHICH IS?
...CHRISTMAS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THEN, WHAT ABOUT YOU, AKIHISA?

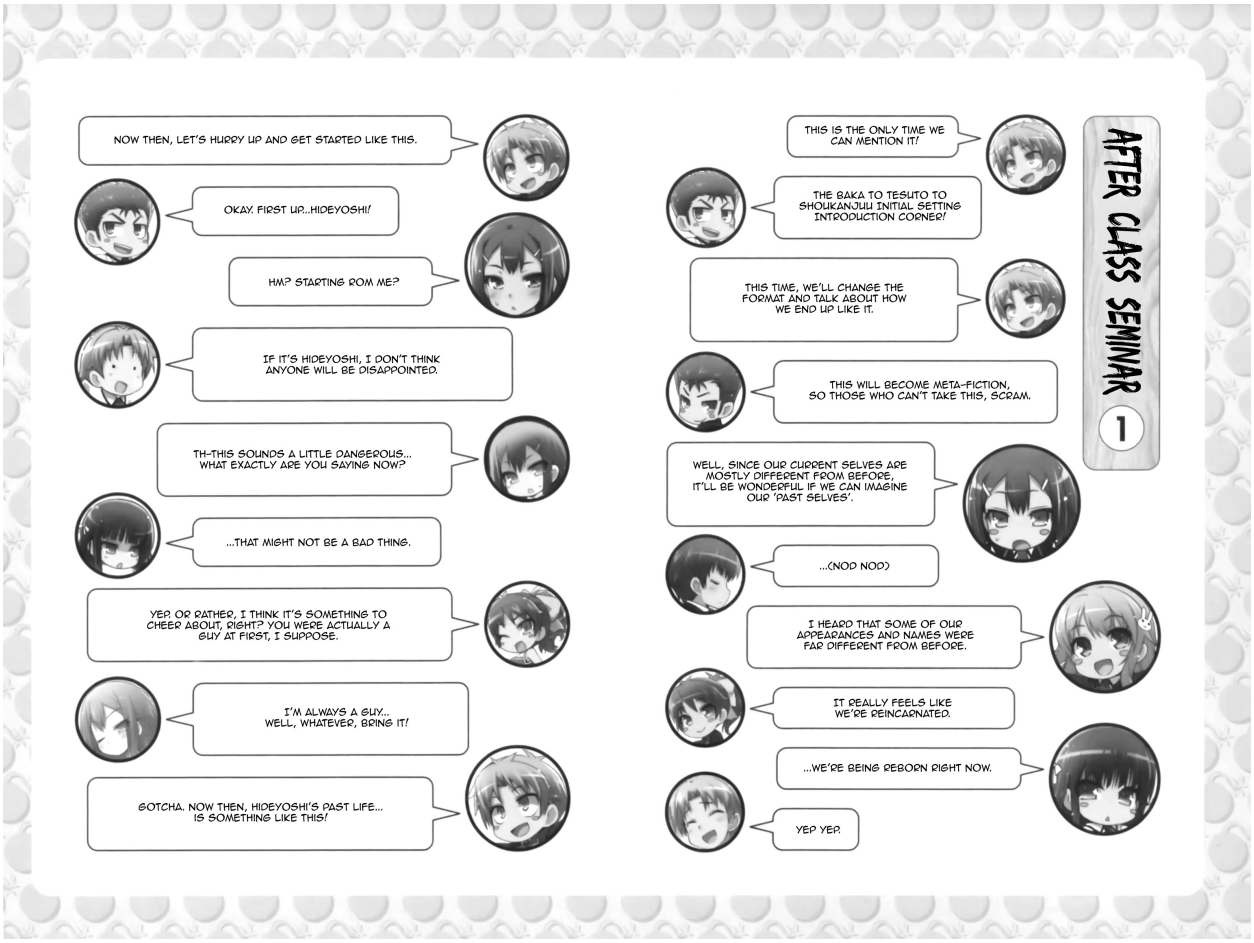
I'M DEFINITELY NOT GOING TO REMAIN ALONE WITH A GIRL!
I'LL BE ENJOY-ING!
AT HOME WITH EVERY-ONE!
...YOU SAVED YOUR OWN LIFE.
WISE CHOICE THERE.

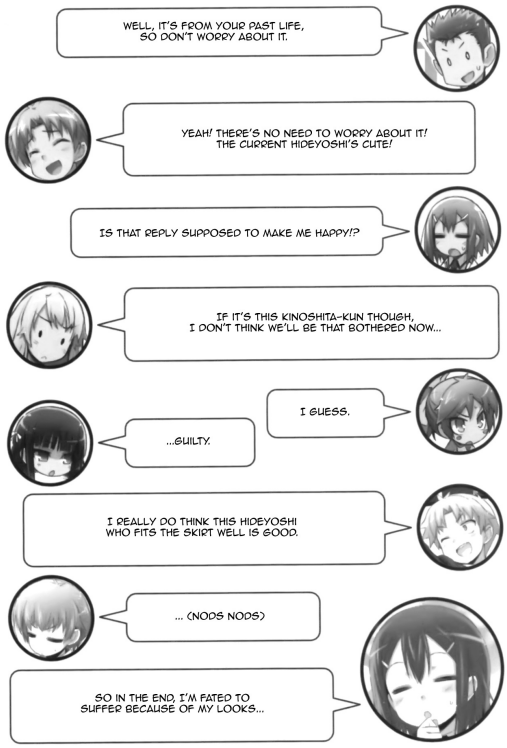
SO EVERYONE, WANNA COME TO MY HOUSE?
ME TOO?
...YUUJI WILL BE TOGETHER WITH ME.
THAT'S AGAINST THE RULES! WE'RE GOING TO AKIHISA'S HOUSE FOR SURE.
I'LL BE COMING ALONG TOO, MIZUKI ♪
UU...I GUESS I'LL BE HAPPY WITH EVERY-ONE THEN.
...I'M JOINING IN.
土屋康太
(ムッツリーニ)
Kouta Tsuchiya
CAN YOU INVITE KUDOU-SAN AND HAZUKI-CHAN TOO?
...UNDER-STOOD.
OKAY. SHE'LL BE DE-LIGHTED.
霧島翔子
Shouko Kirishima
LOOKS LIKE IT'LL BE A FUN DAY.
...
コク

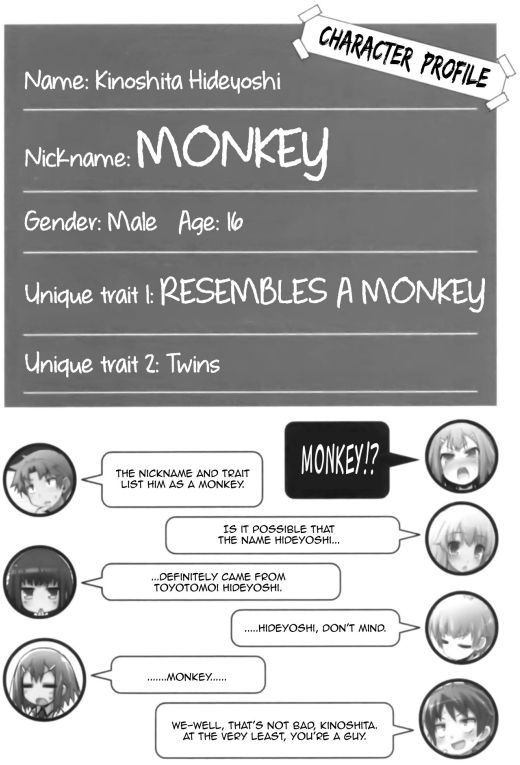
……
ふう…

はぁ…
…NOT ENOUGH
HUH…
教育実習表

After Class Seminar 1


NOW THEN, LET'S HURRY UP AND GET STARTED LIKE THIS.
OKAY. FIRST UP...HIDEYOSHI!
HM? STARTING ROM ME?
IF IT'S HIDEYOSHI, I DON'T THINK ANYONE WILL BE DISAPPOINTED.
TH-THIS SOUNDS A LITTLE DANGEROUS... WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU SAYING NOW?
...THAT MIGHT NOT BE A BAD THING.
YEP. OR RATHER, I THINK IT'S SOMETHING TO CHEER ABOUT, RIGHT? YOU WERE ACTUALLY A GUY AT FIRST, I SUPPOSE.
I'M ALWAYS A GUY... WELL, WHATEVER, BRING IT!
GOTCHA. NOW THEN, HIDEYOSHI'S PAST LIFE... IS SOMETHING LIKE THIS!
AFTER CLASS SEMINAR 1
THIS IS THE ONLY TIME WE CAN MENTION IT!
THE BAKA TO TESUTO TO SHOUKANJUU INITIAL SETTING INTRODUCTION CORNER!
THIS TIME, WE'LL CHANGE THE FORMAT AND TALK ABOUT HOW WE END UP LIKE IT.
THIS WILL BECOME META-FICTION, SO THOSE WHO CAN'T TAKE THIS, SCRAM.
WELL, SINCE OUR CURRENT SELVES ARE MOSTLY DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE, IT'LL BE WONDERFUL IF WE CAN IMAGINE OUR 'PAST SELVES'.
...(NOD NOD)
I HEARD THAT SOME OF OUR APPEARANCES AND NAMES WERE FAR DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE.
IT REALLY FEELS LIKE WE'RE REINCARNATED.
...WE'RE BEING REBORN RIGHT NOW.
YEP YEP.


WELL, IT'S FROM YOUR PAST LIFE, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
YEAH! THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT IT! THE CURRENT HIDEYOSHI'S CUTE!
IS THAT REPLY SUPPOSED TO MAKE ME HAPPY!?
IF IT'S THIS KINOSHITA-KUN THOUGH, I DON'T THINK WE'LL BE THAT BOTHERED NOW...
I GUESS.
...GUILTY.
I REALLY DO THINK THIS HIDEYOSHI WHO FITS THE SKIRT WELL IS GOOD.
... (NODS NODS)
SO IN THE END, I'M FATED TO SUFFER BECAUSE OF MY LOOKS...


CHARACTER PROFILE
Name: Kinoshita Hideyoshi
Nickname: MONKEY
Gender: Male Age: 16
Unique trait 1: RESEMBLES A MONKEY
Unique trait 2: Twins
MONKEY!?
THE NICKNAME AND TRAIT LIST HIM AS A MONKEY.
IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE NAME HIDEYOSHI...
...DEFINITELY CAME FROM TOYOTOMO! HIDEYOSHI.
.....HIDEYOSHI, DON'T MIND.
.....MONKEY.....
WE-WELL, THAT'S NOT BAD, KINOSHITA. AT THE VERY LEAST, YOU'RE A GUY.

Me, Christmas Eve and the Whirls of Conspiracies (First Half)

僕と聖夜と
渦巻く陰謀（前編）

"..."

"What's the matter, principal?"

"Ah, Takahashi-sensei? It's nothing. I just find something to be lacking."

"The Intelligence Quotients of some students?"

"You do come up with some astounding words from time to time!?"

"I wanted to make a joke to calm you down."

"Well, rather than a joke, I'll say that it's a fact."

"I'm really sorry for making a vague joke that wasn't really funny."

"No no, it's fine. More importantly."

"What is it?"

"Are those students attending their remedials properly?"

"Yes. Looking at the current situation, they are, but..."

"But?"

"I suppose that they will be utterly furious in another 2 weeks."

"Is there a basis for the 2 weeks later part?"

"That will be time for Christmas Eve."

"...Those guys will definitely be up to something."

"Yes. It is very likely that those people will create quite a commotion unrelated to their remedials."

"I got it. I'll think of a way."

"Do you have an idea?"

"...Yeah, lots of them."

HIDEYOSHI KINOSHITA

"Now then, Sakamoto, read the following paragraph."

It's time for English remedials.

Yuuji, called out by the Ironman Nishimura, picks up the textbook.

"**Chris must** go to his office. But he has helped his son to~~~"

"Hey, did you just mention Christmas!? Huh!?"

"Calm down, Sugawa. That person's name is Chris, it's not Christmas."

"..."

Sugawa-kun angrily returns to his seat.

Once Yuuji was certain that he was seated, he continues from where he left off.

"There was an interesting **eve**nt for~~~"

"Oi, did you just mention Christmas Eve, you bastard!?"

"You're looking down on us, Sakamoto!!"

"Calm down, Sugawa, Fukumura. That was 'event, not 'eve'."

"..."

Sugawa-kun and Fukumura-kun angrily retreat to their seats.

"His **son tries** Chris to get a~~~"

"""YOU JUST MENTIONED SANTA CLAUS, YOU BASTARD!!!"""

"HAVE YOU HAD ENOUGH ALREADY!?"

The yells from our classmates and Ironman's bellow echoes throughout the classroom.

Christmas Eve's right around the corner, and us F class male students have transformed into a gangster army.

"You went through so much to get decent facilities. What is wrong with you!? Can't you just attend lessons seriously once in a while!?"

A furious Ironman slams the podium.

As he has said, we managed to exchange our rotten facilities from before to get the good classroom of class 3-A due to the summoning war against the 3rd years...well, the only thing that changed for the better are the facilities, and we're still treated as our usual F class.

"But sensei! Please think of of our feelings!"

The guys in our class express their feelings to Ironman with a sincere attitude.

"We hate Yoshii and Sakamoto to death!!"

"Yeah! I want to dice them up!!"

"And we'll feed their corpses to the dogs!"

I don't know any other classmates who are as much of a scumbag as these guys.

"I understand your feelings. If you think you can cool off after executing Yoshii and Sakamoto, go ahead."

And I don't know any other teacher who's as much of a scumbag as him.

"But is this really going to get you guys to calm down?"

""""..."""

Because of Ironman's logical question, our classmates went silent.

And after a while, somebody dejectedly said,

"Yeah...it's as you said, sensei..."

And then, the other classmates too,

"Even if we do execute Yoshii and Sakamoto, Christmas Eve won't be gone..."

"And we won't be happy..."

"Our desires to curse Christmas Eve won't disappear..."

They start to express their honest feelings one by one, and to end off, they shout in unison,

""""BUT WE STILL WANT TO MURDER YOSHII AND SAKAMOTO!!!"

What they probably need to attend isn't English lessons, but philosophy classes now.

"Ah...anyway, calm down for now."

""""But!""""

"For your sake, the principal seems to have a proposal."

Once they heard that it was the principal's proposal, everyone in class start to chatter. Yeah, anything that hag proposed, nothing good came out of it.

"Erm, Nishimura-sensei, what's the principal-sensei's proposal?"

Amongst the voices of the sons of the devil in the classroom came an angelic voice.

She has soft wavy hair and a gentle face. That matured, calm presence of hers would make anyone who interacts with her feel healed. That person's name is Himeji Mizuki--erm, how do I put it? ...she's also someone important to me.

"The principal handed this down. You can take one and hand it down to the back."

Ironman then handed the printouts down to the front row.

I receive a notice Hideyoshi handed from in front of me, and then I send one to Minami behind me. Eh, what's written on it?

Official End-Of-Year Notice

To experience a foreign culture

A Christmas Party will be held.

Besides the usual tree-topper stars and bells,

A Christmas Tree decorated by Kugels and Mistletoe

will be placed at the gymnasium.

There will also be food provided.

All students attending the party are welcome to

Expand their horizon and experience the difference in Christmas cultures

in Japan and foreign countries.

Time: December 24, 15:00

Venue: Fumitzuki Gakuen Gymnasium

Participation Requirements: Fumitzuki Gakuen students.

Gender is not an issue

"Ohh! How nice of the Principal to actually organize a Christmas Event!"

"Looks like I don't have to go hunting those heretics on the streets just to spend time!"

Well, I don't need to use the nail bat and mask that I prepared."

Our classmates are exclaiming praises.

Amongst those words, the last one seems to capture my attention for some reason.

(Gender is not an issue? What does this mean?)

"What's going on here?"

It's now noon break after the lessons ended.

We're having lunch at the tables that were gathered together, and Hideyoshi blurted that as he stares blankly at the printout that was distributed.

"You find it weird too, Hideyoshi?"

"...Me too."

"Since it's that hag's proposal, it's no wonder that we're thinking of it this way."

Muttsurini and Yuuji do find this suspicious as well, but that's not surprising. That old hag caused us to suffer so many times, it's natural for us to be doubting her now, right?

"We don't know what is going to happen this time."

Himeji-san looks a little worried.

In contrast to her, Minami, with her trademark ponytails, continue on,

"Even if she's planning something, it's probably an event to make up for the new

school rules, I guess? Isn't this a good thing?"

The new school rules were clamps on us after our showdown against the third years.

"Love between Students shall be forbidden."

Even though I went to protest to the principal saying that it's the mistake of an era, this rule was still passed, and there's an abnormally high support for it amongst our F class guys. Yeah, their main aim is to obstruct the happiness of others.

"I'd guess that's how it is. Since the school forbids love between students, there should be something during Christmas Eve, right?"

If two people do have interest in each other and end up meeting during Christmas Eve, it'll be a violation of the school rules. That'll be too cruel though, so I guess the principal wanted to organize such a major event in school."

"I'm having mixed feelings about it. I don't know what to make of this..."

"What are you saying, Mizuki? It's because of that rule that you can't be alone together with Aki. You should be happy now, right?"

Minami's showing a profound smile.

I confessed to Himeji-san during that showdown against the third years, and though Himeji-san accepted it...the school rules stopped us, and I can't be together with her right now, so we can only remain as friends. To heck with the rules, I can just ignore it--well, such a thought process won't work in our F class (Even though we're in A class right now). Those heretics who serve the name of justice will definitely make use of their intel and work rate to obstruct our date using whatever means they can.

"But if the old hag's going to organize an event for real, it'll really help me out a lot."

Yuuji said, looking nonchalant.

As for this guy, if he doesn't accept Kirishima-san's invite, he'll get violated her.

If he does accept it, he'll be executed by the FFF. It's a tragic fate where he'll die either way.

"We shall be going to Akihisa's house to party anyway."

"But even so, we'll be targeted for execution no matter what we do."

While we're talking, the guys of the FFF have swapped into white clothes before we know it. According to rumors, they intend to use the spilled blood to dye these white clothes and become Santa Claus. If this event's able to be held successfully, their rage will probably subside a little.

"...In any case, it's not a bad thing."

"Yeah, we can enjoy our Christmas Eve in school now."

Muttsurini and Himeji-san accepted this too, unexpectedly.

Now that I think about it, nobody will meet any misfortune because of this plan. I'll say that this probably is a plan where every participant will feel happen. It's once in a blue moon that the principal does come up with something good.

"I'm starting to feel that this is a good plan too."

While everyone's laughing away, this is a peace we worked so hard to attain at the end of the year, after a year of chaos. This really is something to celebrate, I guess.

"...I too find this to be a marvelous plan."

"Woah!? Shouko!? When did you appear!!?"

While we're chatting away, Kirishima-san suddenly appears behind Yuuji. As usual, she's someone whose presence can't be felt.

"I see. So you're supportive of this plan too, Kirishima-san."

"...Yes, it is wonderful."

"It's unexpected. I'd thought you would surely object to this, Kirishima."

Once Hideyoshi replied, Kirishima-san shakes her head, saying,

"...Because the objective of this activity is 'to experience a foreign Christmas Culture'--"

Normally, Kirishima-san would show a poker face, but right now, she's looking a little happy as she continues,

"...Because there is a rule overseas that 'the ones standing under the mistletoe cannot refuse a kiss'."

Kirishima-san's words indicated the certain bloodshed that would occur during our Christmas Eve.

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The Legend of the Mistletoe.

In Celtic and Norse Mythology, the Mistletoe was deemed a sacred tre

Also, the Mistletoe was seen as a good luck charm
that would protect the children from the demons, and became a target

Happiness and luck occurs under the Mistletoe,
and it was said that men and women who affirmed their relationships

As time went on, it became a legend stating that
'Those that reject a kiss under the Mistletoe shall have ill omens u
```

"Wait, you serious!? If nobody can refuse a kiss, that means even Sugawa can kiss someone, right!?"

"Awesome! If even Sugawa can kiss anyone, isn't this the best event ever!?"

"Like hell you can believe in it! If even Sugawa's kiss can't be rejected, there's something wrong with this event."

The F class idiots definitely wouldn't miss out on such things, and they're creating a ruckus again. Yeah. It's strange if they aren't reacting to such words, I guess?

"Eh...? Eh!? Ehh!?"

The fact Kirishima-san mentioned caused Himeji-san to widen her eyes.

"Ah--speaking of which, I think there's actually something like that."

And on the other hand, Minami seems to know about that culture, so that's why she's answering so calmly. I guess that's to be expected of someone who grew up in Germany.

"...Mizuki, calm down."

"Ah, yes, I've calmed down."

Kirishima-san patted her shoulder on a panicking Himeji-san. It looks like Himeji-san has calmed down thanks to that, and she takes a long breath, before looking at Kirishima-san.

"Shouko-chan, doesn't that mean--"

"...Yes. Though there is the risk of kissing someone you don't wish to kiss--"

Kirishima-san realizes Himeji-san's doubts, and answers as such,

"...It's an experience of the overseas culture, so the good thing about this is that kissing someone else isn't considered an impure interaction between different genders."

Kirishima-san's eyes are looking as harsh as a raptor.

"Eh? But the rules I know of seems to have become that only girls can't refuse the kiss."

"...So there's an added line."

Kirishima-san points at a line, and the words clearly written there are 'gender is not an issue'. Th-that's it...!?

"I thought it was done out of consideration of Hideyoshi."

"...Akihisa, did you mistake me as a natural monument or something?"

So in other words, as long as we get the ones we like 'irregardless of gender' to the Christmas Tree decorated with Mistletoe, we can kiss that person, right...? While this event may have unlimited possibilities, there's a large risk at this...!

"Now then, what do we do? Who are we bringing?"

"Do you have to ask? Of course we'll get anyone we meet. Drag every single girl we meet over!"

"Hmph, that's a stupid question."

The voices of those idiots reach us, and it appears they're going to drag anyone over there no matter who it is. These guys really are F class guys, and it's been almost a year.

But even though they're F class guys, I can't leave them alone like this. I got to say something.

"We can't, everyone! It's not breaking the rules, but it's not a good thing!"

"You're too noisy, Yoshii!"

Enough with that sweet talk!"

"We'll slaughter you, you bastard!"

Well, this is basically the reaction I expected. I'm already used to this level of insult, and I don't mind, so I continue,

"But think about it! Even if you do bring them over, you'll be seen as trash by those girls, they'll be giving you disgusted looks! Are you fine with that?"

""""..."""""

Everyone remain silent. Even if they manage to bring someone over while being all pumped up and such, they probably will feel dejected after thinking of the situation after that.

Just when I'm thinking that this is fine and prepare to head back to my seat, Sugawa-kun stands up, turns to everyone, and yells,

"You guys are hopeless! How can you be dejected just like this!? Can you be considered proud members of the exalted FFF Inquisition!?"

If you're proud of it, I think you won't be forcing unwilling girls to kiss you.

"But Sugawa!"

"The feeling of being rejected entirely really doesn't feel good!"

"Yeah! You're the exception to be looked down on all the time!"

Everyone in class answer.

Sugawa-kun reaches his hands out, seeming accepting everyone's views, and the continues with a calm tone.

"I understand your feelings. Kissing is part of the rules, but even I'll be heartbroken to be utterly hated by girls."

"""So...!"""

"So you guys, when you face such a situation, this is where you repeat this 3 times in your heart."

He stops, looks around at everyone, and then says,

"--Hate me, hate me, and then you'll love me."

"""As to be expected of you, leader--!"""

Looks like I underestimated these guys' stubborn will.

"Wait wait, calm down already, you guys."

Hideyoshi claps his hands as he stands up, trying to calm down the rowdy class.

"You guys are being so open with your words before you're even hated. There's no way the girls will come."

""""Ah...""""

This is where our classmates seem to have realized this. Eh? Me? Of course I knew right from the get go.

"Well, ah...I guess that's it."

"Haha...what daydreams are we having anyway...?"

"There's still something more suitable for us to do..."

""""Our raison d'etre is to unite together and wreck this event!""""

This class is really the worst!

"...We won't let you."

"Yeah. How can we allow you to ruin everything!?"

"Th-that's right! I waited for so long, and I can't give up on this chance!"

Kirishima-san, Minami and Himeji-san stands up to protest against Sugawa-kun and the others.

"Even if it's your heartfelt voices, I won't listen to you!"

"Right! Don't think you can beat us here!"

"I'll do my best to kiss the girl! I don't care how much I'm looked down!"

"I want to wreck this event! This event shouldn't exist!"

"We can't wreck this event!! This may be the only chance for us to kiss someone!"

"Anyway, only the misfortune of the couples can protect me!"

After this incident, us second years were divided into three factions,

<The faction that wants to break the school rule forbidding love and get together.>

<The faction that wants to kiss a girl no matter how much they're looked down on.>

<The faction that wants to ruin other people's happiness, as long as they're the only ones getting happiness.>

And what was supposed to be an event held on the Christmas Eve became a riot because of all kinds of thoughts.

It's the day of the Eve itself.

The third years aren't attending because it was nearly time for their exams, and the first years said that they would be negatively affected if they got involved with us (how rude), so they aren't coming. As usual, only the second years are gathered at the gym for the Eve itself.

"Wow! They really did prepare drinks and snacks!"

"Even the decorations have a Christmas feel to them."

The decorations in the gym we entered really can be said to be in a party mood. They also did prepare simply drinks and tidbits.

"But I'm surprised by you, Akihisa. I'd say that back then, you would be rushing over whenever you see food."

"Right now, my food money's kept in check because nee-san's watching me."

What happens next is that the money to buy games and manga vanished. If I have to say, I prefer my previous lifestyle...

"For me, I'm glad that Akihisa-kun's living a healthy lifestyle. But I don't have a reason to make food for me, so I'm a little lonely..."

But thanks to that, the chances of me eating Himeji-san's killer cooking is much less than before. Maybe I have to thank nee-san about that.

"But nobody's really interested in the food."

"Of course. Eating isn't the main point for everyone today."

We're hungry high school students with large appetites, but none of us in the gym is touching the food and drinks. We're just staring at the large Christmas Tree in the middle of it all.

"Hey, what do we do, Sugawa? Do we kill off that bastard Yoshii first?"

"No, wait. Himeji and Shimada won't come to the tree if that happens. Lure the prey in. Wait for it to fall into the trap, and go for the kill."

"I see. So the trick's to use the girls as bait and execute him."

That's the conversation of the <We just want to kiss the girl no matter how much they look down on us> faction centered around Sugawa-kun. That gang's planning on the toughest thing, but with so many people around, I should be most wary of this group.

"What should we do...?"

"What? Anyway? Let's destroy everything!"

"But 'he' hasn't given any instructions..."

That's the conversation of the <event destroying faction>.

Most of the genuine scumbags are part of Sugawa-kun's faction, and the non-scumbags students typically won't come to wreck everything. Because of that, this faction is in the awkward position of being the smallest, and there doesn't seem to be someone leading them. I can't just ignore them, but there's nothing worth being wary against them of.

And then,

"Let's do our best...let's experience a foreign culture."

"...I'll do my best too."

This is the event supporting faction led by Himeji-san and Kirishima-san. Of course, I belong to this faction too.

"Yuuji, what do you think we should do first?"

I ask Yuuji, who's standing beside me.

"Oh, yeah."

Yuuji stares at the Christmas Tree, and answers.

"First, we need to break from the girls and act separately."

"Eh? Why?"

I can't help but blurt. We're aiming to go to the Tree with the girls. If we're to work separately, we can't do so.

Yuuji seems to have predicted that I would answer this, and continues,

"Did you just hear Sugawa's words? if we're going to achieve our aim, we need to first eliminate our enemies and ensure our safety. If things are going as what those guys want, Himeji's going to end up experiencing the foreign culture with someone else now, you know?"

"I-I see! That's how it is."

Well, what Yuuji said is rather correct. Forget about being unable to achieve my own aims; I can't let Himeji-san's lips be taken by anyone else! He's right. We need to first eliminate our enemies.

"Do you understand this too, Shouko? Move over to a safe place for now."

"...But."

"Don't let me explain myself again. The most important thing to me is to ensure your safety."

"...Yes, I got it. Let's go, Mizuki."

"O-okay."

Himeji-san nods lightly, and follows Kirishima-san.

"Now then, Yuuji, how about we clean up this trash once the event starts?"

"Right. You can have the barricade tape and start off first. I'll clean up the scraps."

"OK!"

The basic plan was set. Our attentions are gathered on the signal to indicate the start of the event.

And about five minutes later,

What sounds like Takahashi-sensei's voice can be heard as the announcement comes from the readied speakers.

"The Fumitzuki Gakuen Christmas Experience Program shall begin from now. Please be discreet and have a pleasant Christmas Eve."

""""GO TO HELL!!!!!!!!!!!""""

These words indicated the start of a discreet, enjoyable Eve.

Speaking of which, based on what I just heard, as long as Himeji-san and Kirishima-san aren't around, the chances of any attack from Sugawa-kun and the others, the ones we should be most wary of, should be low now. Doesn't look like I'm in much danger--

""Die, Yoshii, Sakamoto!!""

"Why!?"

Sugawa-kun and Fukumura-kun suddenly attacks Yuuji and me. They don't care about their plan now?

"Calm down, Sugawa-kun! Fukumura-kun! Your plan won't work even if you get rid of us!"

I dodge as I try to calm them down.

""Like hell it won't!""

But my words were rejected by them.

"That's why I say that you're stupid, Yoshii."

"You're seriously too naive there!"

"Wh-what's going on?"

What's wrong with my thinking here? They definitely won't attack us without Himeji-san and the others around. Am I wrong?

"We'll hang you on the Tree to lure Himeji out!"

"So you can just go ahead and die first."

"That's more evil than what I imagined!"

And what's ridiculous is that they're making it sound somewhat logical. Even their personalities have rotted further! Looks like I need to do something now!

"Let's go, Yuuji!"

"Okay!"

A charging Sugawa-kun faces off against me, and standing in front of Fukumura-kun is Yuuji.

""DIE!!!""

I dodge Sugawa-kun's punch, and turn behind him to give him a kick.

On the other hand, Yuuji uses the momentum to grab the enemy and throw him off.

"Wo-woahh..omph!!"

"Oompgh!"

Fukumura-kun was thrown away, and knocked into Sugawa-kun who was kicked away.

And then, when they crashed.

""""Ah""""

"Ow...what?"

"Wh-what's going on now? Why are they looking at us now?"

--They rolled to the bottom of the Christmas Tree...they're there now.

"Sugawa Ryo-kun and Fukumura Kouhei-kun of class 2-F have arrived under the Mistletoe. Please experience the culture together."

Takahashi-sensei calmly announced.

"W-wait, you're kidding, right!?"

"It's impossible for us guys here, right!?"

"There was a notification in the event announcement. Do experience the culture as quickly as possible."

Wait, don't tell me that the 'gender is not an issue' part isn't just for a girl and a guy, but even guy on guy is fine here...!?

"W-wait! This is too ridiculous now!"

"Yeah! I object!"

"Objection overruled. Both of you are to experience the culture as quickly as possible. If you wish to continue resisting, the teachers' summoned beasts will forcibly carry it out."

Since the rules were set, it's useless no matter how Sugawa-kun and Fukumura-kun protests. Well, it's because they wanted to use this rule to kiss girls, and the girls have to accept this, yet they want to arrogantly refuse this. There's no way there can be such a good thing.

"The second warning is over. Since the parties involved have no intention of carrying on, the teachers shall forcefully execute this."

"NOOOOOOOO!!!!"

"SOMEBODY! SOMEBODY SAVE ME! THIS IS TOO CRAZY! DON'T COME HERE, SUGAWAA! DON'T COME HERE!!"

The flustered yells happen right when the two faces approach each other.

""..""

And then, their lips met.

.....This is...terrible.....

"Hey, look...that Fukumura has passed out..."

"That bastard Sugawa's eyes are gone now...he's now a vegetable, isn't he...?"

The students watching the chaos from afar can be heard whispering.

'*"Now then, we have a pair experiencing the culture festival. All other parties, please participate with enthusiasm."*

The killing intent that was roaming just a while back is now completely gone, and replacing it is a gloomy atmosphere covering the gym.

""""...(gulps)""""

Everyone present gulps.

Now...we can't move carelessly at all...!

I can feel tension throughout my body.

Or I'll say that thanks to this tension, the sixth sense I've refined for so long unconsciously captures the killing intent coming from behind, and I manage to dodge that attack successfully.

"!"

Whoosh. That kick grazes past the top of my head right when I squat.

While I hastily adjust myself and pull my distance, standing in front of me is the scumbag who's clicking his tongue because his attack missed.

"What are you doing, Yuuji!?"

"Damn it...your sixth sense is ridiculously good, Akihisa!"

That opponent is--the guy who's supposed to be my buddy--Yuuji.

"Stop it, Yuuji! Aren't we having the same aim!?"

"How can we possibly have the same aims!? I never intended to be on your side!"

"Why!? Don't you want to experience the culture with Kirishima-san!?"

You're a guy too, and you're in love with Kirishima-san. There's no reason for you to be unwilling!

"This isn't a question of whether I want to do this, Akihisa! Well, I don't think you'll understand when you confessed so loudly it could be heard from anywhere near the school."

"W-what?"

"--Isn't it just a punishment game for any ordinary person to do that sort of thing in front of so many people?"

...Ohh, now that you mention it, yeah.

"I get it, Yuuji."

"Yeah. In other words, we just need to deal with everyone watching, right?"

"You don't have any right to criticize Sugawa-kun and the others!"

Yuuji raises his fist. Ugh!...Negotiation breakdown!

I'm fine though! A scumbag's rebellion is nothing in the face of so many in our faction!

"<Event supporting team>! End this trash now!"

I shout out.

But in response of my shout, everyone around me

"...Huh?"

Doesn't seem to be responding to my shout. What's going on?

"Pfft...you're really an idiot, Akihisa."

"What the?"

"Did you forget that the central members of your faction Shouko and Himeji aren't here?"

Suddenly, I understand what Yuuji meant at the start of the event...he sent Himeji-san and Kirishima-san not to ensure their safety, but to get rid of them...!

"No way, Yuuji...! And I still trusted you as a friend...you're an ally...!"

"Ha! Thanks for trusting me so much, Akihisa! I'm against this event to begin with!"

How cruel...! My trust was actually betrayed...!

"Does that mean that the bug I set just in case comes in handy now!?"

"...Yuuji, I heard everything."

"Woah? Shouko!? Akihisa you bastard! You didn't trust me at all, did you!?"

"...Yuuji, don't you dare run away."

Yuuji's scampering like a rabbit, and Kirishima-san's giving pursuit from behind. Now then, I've sealed Yuuji for now.

"Alright, up next, I'll--hm?"

"...don't you dare escape, Akihisa."

Another killing intent, and this time it's from Muttsurini holding a taser.

"Impossible! Why are you on that side too, Muttsurini!?"

"...Akihisa, you won't understand."

Muttsurini's glaring at me with vengeful eyes.

"...The pain of this body cursed by blood whenever there's a good opportunity."

While he does look decent, the main thing is that he'll have a nosebleed whenever he's about to kiss someone.

"Ah, I get it. If you get too close, you will touch a girl's breasts, right?"

"...(Shakes head furiously)"

Muttsurini continues to deny with his old usual self. If this guy's doing this action, he's basically admitting to it.

"You don't have to give up, Muttsurini. You just need to get together with a girl who's flat-chested."

"...Are you talking about Shimada?"

Now even Muttsurini's thinking is that 'flat-chested = Minami'. I can't help but find this pitiful.

"...She has someone she likes."

"...Ah..."

Muttsurini's words and eyes cause me to let out a strange squeal. Do-don't say such embarrassing things now...

"N-no, isn't there someone else?"

"...Hideyoshi's a friend."

Ahh, yeah, well, Hideyoshi's rather flat--no!

"Isn't there anyone else other than Hideyoshi?"

Muttsurini then goes through a quick thought.

After that, he seems to have thought of something, and says to me,

"...Akihisa."

"Yeah?"

"...Going for Shimada's sister is a crime."

I'm thinking that Muttsurini's brain is dangerous to actually think like that.

"Seriously. Why are you having such tunnel vision--"

"...Shut up. I'll kill you."

While I'm focusing on talking, Muttsurini charges at me with his agility and the taser in his hand. I-I'm doomed--!

Right when I'm a step slow in my reaction, thinking that I'll be hit by Muttsurini.

"Well then, can I bother you for a while, Muttsurini-kun?"

"...!?"

Somebody's voice can be heard from the side, and his actions immediately stop.

"Phoaa!"

Using that rare chance, I roll aside to dodge that attack. That was real close.

"Thanks for helping, Kudou-san. You saved me."

"No no. It's not much."

Helping me here is Muttsurini's nemesis, Kudou Aiko-san of A class."

"...Kudou Aiko, what are you doing here?"

"Ahaha. It's nothing much."

While Muttsurini jumps back and warily guards himself, Kudou-san raises her chest, and laughs.

"Well, my breasts are really small, you know?"

""..""

Muttsurini and I are left speechless. This really is a troubling confession.

"...What are you trying to say?"

"Hm...well."

She places a finger at her chin, and chirps,

"Do you want to experience the foreign culture with me?"

"...The presence of death looms...!"

Muttsurini rolls aside in his panic, and flying right by him was a ball point pen and a penknife.

""""Tch.""""

Also, there's the loud sound of clicking tongues around us. The FFF Inquisition won't allow traitors to exist.

"...Kudou Aiko...ar-are you trying to kill me...?"

"Not all. I"m just wondering if it's time we should at least end the proposition when we first met?"

"...What do you mean?"

"Do you need to ask?"

While Muttsurini keeps his guard up, Kudou-san takes a step forward.

"--Shall we have practical health education?"

"...Killing intent...!"

Muttsurini dodges the assault of stationery that's definitely heavier than the last time.

While he continues to keep his guard up, Kudou-san then continues happily,

"You don't have to be so nervous, Muttsurini-kun. I'm different from you in that I do have lots of practical experience."

"...This really isn't good...!"

"Ahaha. It's just a normal culture experience. No need to be shy about it!"

Muttsurini turns around and runs off, while Kudou-san continues to pursue him. Well...if it's Kudou-san, maybe Muttsurini can pass through this safely without a nosebleed. Now that's a little interesting experience...though I'm so envious I want to kill him.

"Well, whatever. Looking at this, Muttsurini will have the option of either bleeding out due to nosebleed or be executed by the FFF Inquisition."

In any case, it's better to see Muttsurini retreat first.

"Now then, what shall I do."

"Push the tree down! Once we're done with that, the event can't possibly continue!"

"Get all the girls to the Tree, no matter whether we have to beg or lie to them!"

Looking at this, I can take down the anti-event and unscrupulous factions down at once.

☆

"Yoshii!! You're the one who's happiness is something I hate more than anyone else!"

"I'll probably go jump off from a building if I see this idiot kiss Himeji!!"

"In other words, this is a proper defense! Us murdering you is legal by law!"

There are people swarming in from everywhere.

But even so, it's troublesome to be underestimated. I've been through such battles so many times, and I can't possibly be waiting for my death here!

"Photo barrier!"

Saying this, I fish out a certain photo.

"Hah! You're begging for mercy using an erotic photo?"

"We might as well search you for them after we end you life...!"

The trio charging at me--Nakamura-kun, Yano-kun and Mori-kun stopped. Humph...idiots!

"Looks like you've notice it, Nakamura-kun, Mori-kun. In fact, Yano-kun's on my side!"

On the photo I took out is Yano-kun holding hands with a girl.

"Yano! You bastard...!"

"I was wrong about you, ex-comrade!"

"W-wait! It's a misunderstanding! I don't have a girlfriend! Have a closer look!"

"Your explanation can come after your death!"

"Wooaahhh!!"

Yano-kun's executed in the blink of an eye. Good work! Now I have one less enemy to deal with.

"No, wait, doesn't this photo look photoshopped?"

"Damn it! Yoshii, you bastard! You made us snap Yano's finger joints, tie his limbs and drop a rock on him...how despicable..."

Let me say this first, I didn't ask them to go this far.

"An-anyway, now's a chance!"

I charge in towards Mori-kun and Nakamura-kun while they're faltering.

But even though it's 2 vs 1, they're keeping their distance from me, wary of me, and they shout to their buddies behind them,

"Hey, come help us already, you guys!"

"Yoshii's here! Everyone, surround him!"

It seems they putting a high bounty on me in this war. I'm glad for this, but right now, this situation isn't something I can be happy about.

"Eh, well whatever. I'm used to being surrounded anyway."

While the scumbags are swarming in one after another, I proceed to adjust my position. While making sure I'm not being attacked from behind, I'm making sure that the enemies behind the first row can't attack. Right now, I just need to wait for them to reveal an opening before I attack.

"You bastard...! You're dodging around!"

"You're in the way! Scram!"

"Shut up! I don't have a reason to breathe anymore if I don't personally get my hands on this bastard!!"

While the attacks come at me, I proceed to dodge some, parry others, and once in a while, fight back. There's no real development, but this little moment isn't that bad for me.

The change in development is,

--Zaza.

There's static coming from the speakers. Looks like Takahashi-sensei's about to broadcast some news. What is it this time?

"Sorry to inform everyone, but we are adjusting the summoning system right now, so we shall be implementing a summoning field all over the school. Everyone's summoned beast will be able to touch physically, and as it is dangerous, please do not do so carelessly--"

""""Summon!""""

They summoned without hesitation. These guys are undoubtedly scumbags, the king of the trash.

"Now you're dead no matter what you do now, Yoshii!!"

"We too went through lots of summoning wars!"

"Don't think you're the only one with an advantage controlling your summoned beast!"

The summoned beasts charge at me at a speed that exceeds humans. I don't think there's anyone other than Ironman who's able to fight a summoned beasts with his physical body.

In that case--

"Right! I'll make you regret challenging me with summoned beasts! Summon!"

I too can only fight back with a summoned beast!

"Let's do this, you bastards!!"

""""Take thisss!!""""

The enemies charge in along with their summoned beasts.

And they ignore my summoned beast.

"Wha...!"

"Die!"

"Grit your teeth!"

"Guh!"

The summoners and the summoned beasts charge right at me. It's bad if I'm targeted by so many at once...

"Damn...it!"

I let my summoned beast attack the enemy before I'm surrounded, but their summoned beasts merely take my attacks and charge right at me.

"So what?"

They shrug off the attacks, and they're aiming at me.

This is really bad! So many people are ganging up on me, and they're partnered with summoned beasts that they are stronger and faster than a human. If they're going to attack me at once, I can only forget about controlling the summoned beast and attack. But my summoned beast is unique in that they'll feel the pain from the feedback. If I leave it there and let it be attacked, I won't be able to focus on dodging because of the pain.

In other words, the enemy can just focus on attacking me, and I'm in a fix where I have to focus on dodging and controlling my summoned beast. I've been had...!

"I got careless...! These guys are actually thinking--"

"Go and die, Yoshii! Die die die!"

"We don't care about the summoned beast or whatever!"

"I really hate you to death!"

"..."

I guess that's the outcome when they act on their instincts instead of thinking.

We-well, leaving aside the process, I'm really cornered right now. What do I do now...!

Right when I'm gritting my teeth.

"Aki!"

A familiar voice can be heard from the other side of the human wall.

"!"

I duck in the blink of an eye.

At the same time, the summoned beasts following the people surrounding me vanish without a trace. Is it the summoned beasts that were beaten back causing an interference that clears them all?

"Thanks. You saved me there, Minami!"

"Hoho, it's not much."

Once she says so, she pats the ponytail on her shoulder.

"If you really want to thank me, invite me to that Tree."

Is it just me, or did I just hear something really extraordinary?

"M-Minami, that was..."

"You idiot. Do you...really want me to say that thing?"

I'm speechless.

If we go based by what Minami said, that means, that...she wants to experience the culture with me, or something like that. Ever since the summoning war against the third years, she'll occasionally let out these bombshell like words.

"E-ermm, Minami, well, I'll be troubled."

"Really? Didn't the principal just say it? It's just a culture experience. It's no different from a greeting in Germany where I grew up in."

"Are you serious? Then, Shimada, you might as well give up on that garbage and come with me, how about it?"

"Me next!"

"Just thinking about it is enough to make me puke."

Something like greeting is enough to make you puke, huh?

"Okay, Aki, let's go."

"Wa-wait, Minami, this really is bad!"

Minami grabs my hand, and I'm retreating away, trying to retreat.

Seeing me like this, Minami looks hurt.

"Aki..."

"So-sorry, Minami. I-I can't explain this to you well.."

"It's fine. I know you'll be bothered by this, Aki."

"Minami..."

Well, it's a culture experience in name, and though I already have Himeji-san, we aren't officially going out together. I do feel however that I can't develop that kind of relationship with Minami, so even though the rules state that I can't refuse, if I'm to go on a Christmas date with Minami, I don't know what kind of face I should show. No, I don't know whether I should reject or accept this.

It seems Minami understands my feelings as she continues,

"But well, Aki. This is what I think."

"Eh? What?"

"If you're being so troubled--"

"Oh, okay."

"--I think it's fine if I knock you out in such a moment."

Isn't that already criminal!?

"So I say, Aki, go to sleep for a while."

"Ehh!! Isn't that decision too masculine already!?"

I jump back to dodge the punch Minami launches at me without hesitation. No wonder Minami's so popular amongst the girls given her decisiveness and mobility.

It's tough for me to fight Minami one on one, and also, we aren't the only ones here.

"E-everyone, help me fight Minami off!"

"Huh!? What are you saying now, you bastard!?"

"Who wants to help you now?"

All I get for my pleas are cold responses. However, I do want everyone to calm down and think.

"If Minami is to win now, I'll have to experience the culture festival with her."

""""Bring it!""""

Thanks guys!

"What, Aki? You hate being with me?"

Looking at me, Minami puffs her cheeks unhappily. I hate Minami? That's...

"That's not it, Minami! It's because I don't hate you that I'm troubled!"

"Eh...?"

As Minami has said, I do find her to be a special girl. Right now however, I already have someone I've chosen, so I can't falter and give in to Minami now. It'll be dishonest to both Minami and Himeji-san, and I can't let this happen!

"It's because I don't hate you that I can't promise you that. You can understand

right, Minami?"

"I-in that case...I guess I don't have a choice.."

Minami blushes as she lowers her head.

And then, she again lifts her head, beaming away as she says,

"Then, to give you a chance to find your excuse, I'll just knock you out and bring you to the tree♪"

This isn't what I'm getting at.

"Anyway, you guys! If you dare get in the way, prepare yourselves!"

Minami stands in front of my precious comrades, and squints her eyes.

Some of them are looking at our conversation, unable to contain the rage (jealousy) in their hearts, and they're in battle mode.

"Tch! Don't look down on us, Shimada!"

"You're the one who should be prepared!"

"Wipe your lips and wait for me to kiss you!"

"Humph, fine by me! Bring it on!"

Once Minami sees that everyone's looking agitated, she snorts, and says,

"I'll just rip off your limbs and use the flesh as hamburger patties."

""""..""""

Why is it that the guards around me always have such a grave misconception about cooking?

"What's the matter? You aren't coming?"

Minami takes a step forward.

Everyone takes a step back, seemingly escaping from here. You can't! We're losing in momentum against a creator of the cuisine of darkness different from Himeji-san's.

"E-everyone, we can't lose in terms of momentum! We can beat her with numbers!"

"Hohoho...cry if you're scared, like a little maiden."

"I found you, onee-sama!!!"

"NOOOO!!! Miharu!?"

Minami screamed like a little maiden upon seeing Shimizu-san leap at her. Well, she just showed us a textbook example. A textbook case of battery.

"Onee-sama, do as I wish! Come with Miharu to the Christmas Tree! Hurry hurry!"

"H-how...! This is impossible! I gave you enough anesthetic that can knock out an elephant in 2 seconds!"

What did you just make her drink?

"Onee-sama, it's definitely because miracles do happen during Christmas Eve. To be precise, Miharu felt danger the moment Miharu had it in the mouth, and spat it out!"

"Uu...! If I leave you alone like this, the party at Aki's house will...! Alright, Miharu! I'm going to stuff it down your throat and make sure you don't spit it out!"

"I don't want it unless it's mouth to mouth!"

The battle between Minami and Shimizu-san is gradually becoming a hot-blooded wrestling match. I'm starting to wonder if any ordinary person seeing them will think of them as fighters instead of high school students.

"I understand, onee-sama! I'll throw this man and that ugly pig to that tree so that you won't want to have a culture festival with them, and I'll show you an

unbearable sight!"

"I'll throw you to that tree along with those guys before you can do it."

"Listen up everyone! It's dangerous here, so run away!"

"""No objections!"""

And all of us hurriedly escape from the place to avoid being caught in their argument.

At a safety zone far away from the Tree.

"Akihisa!"

"Ack, Yuuji...! You bastard! You're still alive...!"

I just so happen to meet Yuuji, who managed to stay alive and escape from Kirishima-san. Damn it, this guy's as alive as a cockroach!

"Listen up, Yuuji, if you dare stop me now, I'm going to kill you here."

"Wait, calm down, Akihisa. Listen to me first!"

While I got into position, Yuuji moves his hands in front of me and shows a 'stop' sign. Eh? It's rare that this guy's begging for mercy before me.

"What are you planning, Yuuji?"

"Anyway, I need you to help."

Help? What's this idiot saying now?

"Weren't you trying to attack me as part of the anti-event faction? What's with this out of a sudden...?"

"Of course. I don't want Himeji to hate me when she's so excited, and it's better for me that the FFF directs their jealousy at you."

Yuuji's actually using that as an excuse. I could have helped, but now I don't feel like helping after he said that.

"Then, why do you want me to help now?"

"It's not--really unexpected, but my losses are more than I expected, and I'm lacking in numbers."

"Hm? What do you mean?"

"I lost 85% of my fighting forces trying to stop Shouko."

"So that means Kirishima-san basically took out an entire class by herself...?"

No matter how much of a minority they are, there should be quite a few of them. She's eliminating so many of them by herself, it's like she's a spartan or something at this point.

"I understand your situation, but you and I have different wishes, right?"

I'm of the faction wishing for the event to happen, and Yuuji's against it. How do I help him.

After hearing my words, Yuuji tells me off like he's educating a kid,

"I say, you're an idiot. Think about it. What will happen if your wish happens? And what will you do tomorrow?"

"Hm...?"

Now that he said that, I never did think of what will happen after tomorrow.

I had to endure thanks to the new school rules, but doing that culture experience thing in front of so many people is like a public execution. Also, once that happens, those guys will be so jealous that they'll carry out a public execution during the FFF Inquisition hearing.

"Eh...?"

Speaking of which, this doesn't just applies to us pro-eventers, it goes for the rest too.

Anyone will feel disgusted having to kiss someone they don't want to do with, so the ones happy will be hated by others starting from tomorrow. This is basically what it means to be on tenterhooks.

"That's weird...at the very least, it should be the Holy Night worth celebrating over..."

All kinds of lighting are placed on the streets since a month back, and kids and couples will get excited about this. This kind of activity is the real Holy Night.

Now that I mention it, what's the reality appearing in front of us?

Students wounded and fallen.

Decorations that were caught in the turmoil and wrecked.

Growls and grudges echoing everywhere.

Maybe...

"If it continues on like this, if we think of what awaits us afterwards, there'll just be suffering for everyone...?"

Once my mutter was heard,

"That is correct. You've finally noticed it, Yoshii-kun."

Appearing behind Yuuji is the second in our year, Kubo-kun.

"Eh? This? Why are you here, Kubo-kun?"

"What is the matter, Yoshii-kun? Why are you looking so shocked?"

"No, well, I'm shocked here. I thought you won't have any interest in this sort of thing, and that you wouldn't come, Kubo-kun."

When we were peeping on the girls a long time back, Kubo-kun wouldn't participate even until the very end. Looking at his serious personality, he

probably won't like such a frivolous thing.

"It's true that I don't really like such activities. Based on tradition, it should be done between willing parties, and I'm not really comfortable with the liberal Euro-American style of liberalism."

"You're right."

"But, I'm not making it an absolute."

Kubo-kun nudges his glasses with his middle finger.

"Once I learnt of the one I like being involved in such an activity, I couldn't stand back and watch."

What's going on? I feel a chill on my back the moment Kubo-kun said these words. Is it because the heater in the gym's broken?

"I hope you're not mistaken, Yoshii-kun. I don't intend to participate in the culture festival with that person."

"Ah, I see."

He did just say that.

"It's just that I don't wish to see that person kiss anyone else again."

"I see...huh...?"

Kubo-kun's words seem very strange to me for some reason.

...Again, as in...?

"Even now, I'm dreaming of what I couldn't stop back then. I want to do my best to prevent any further regrets."

"I-I see. I don't really understand, but I think it's fine."

Anyway, let's end this conversation now. This is what my instincts are telling me.

"Yeah, that's how it is. It's about time to end this stupid event, Akihisa."

"It's as Sakamoto-kun said, Yoshii-kun. We're aiming for the same thing. Will you not help us?"

Now that they mention it, it's really the case. If the three of us can work together and end this activity, that'll be the best outcome for us.

"Alright, let's do this, Yuuji, Kubo-kun!"

"Alright! Let's cut that Tree down and put an end to this mass of evil!"

"We shall work together to achieve our aim, Yoshii-kun."

"Righto!"

We should end this event that'll make all participants very unhappy here!

"I won't let you! --Summon!"

""""!?""""

With a sudden shadow popping in, we got into battle positions.

""Summon!""

Yuuji, and Kubo-kun then proceed to call out their summoned beasts to fight off the intruder.

2-D, Tamano Miki, Physics, 92 points

Vs

2-F, Yoshii Akihisa, Physics, 88 points.

+

2-F, Sakamoto Yuuji, Physics, 269 points.

+

2-A Kubo Toshimitsu, Physics, 353 points.

The opponent's Tamano-san from D class? She's a dangerous opponent in many ways...but with this level of points, it's fine!

"Sorry, Tamano-san, but I'm going to end this quickk."

Once Tamano-san's summoned beast appears, I let my own summoned beast charge over and attack. She's trying to let it defend itself, but there's still many openings in that defence, and my attack manages to penetrate through without much difficulty, hitting the main body.

2-D, Tamano Miki, Physics, 4 points

Vs

2-F, Yoshii Akihisa, Physics, 88 points.

Now that the numbers have updated, Tamano-san's summoned beast is dying. She can't so much use a kid's strength now.

But even so.

"It's...not over yet!"

Tamano-san continues to control her summoned beast while showing no signs of giving up.

As she's lacking in strength, the beast is just swaying around whenever it raises the weapon. I'm guessing that it's more likely for her to self-destruct than for me to beat her seeing how she's so weak now.

"I won't agree to cutting the Tree down!"

But even so, Tamano-san continues to desperately stand in front of us.

"Tamano-san, why must you...?"

I just blurt out without thinking.

There's Kubo-kun, second in our year with a powerful summoned beast.

There's Yuuji with amazing reflexes, skilled at fighting and high scores.

And there's me, the punishment inspector whose control of the summoned beast always puts me in an advantage.

It's the 3 of us versus Tamano-san herself. It's a little rude for me to say this, but--she's too weak.

But even so, Tamano-san continues to try and stand up, and I'm somewhat respecting her for this.

"Give up already, Tamano-san! If you keep this up, we're going to do some direct measures even if you're a girl"

While I'm trying to coax her to back down, looking at how she is right now, I'm guessing that even if her summoned beast is beaten, she'll charge right at us. If that really happens, we have to do something appropriate against it, but I really don't want to do it if I can. Please, back down...!

"I can't...give up...!"

Why is it that my earnest wishes can't reach her? Tamano-san drags her dying summoned beast and charges at us with that weak, girlish power of hers.

"Because, that Tree, is the symbol of hope...! It's something important to everyone...!"

"T-Tamano-san..."

"I won't admit defeat until Aki-chan, Sakamoto-kun and Kubo-kun reaches that Tree...!"

"Yuuji, Kubo-kun, let's do this!"

"Here we go!"

"I'm sorry, Tamano-san."

"Ahh! My summoned beast! My summoned beast--pwehh!?"

Yuuji and Kubo-kun defeats Tamano-san's summoned beast, while I proceed to carefully tie up Tamano-san with tape and wire. Phew...she's still as dangerous a girl as before...

"Nmm! Mhmmm!!!?"

While pinning down Tamano-san as she continues to struggle by her hands, I look for Yuuji.

Yuuji turns towards me, saying with a smile,

"I actually wanted to use you as a sacrifice, or a decoy at least. Kubo and I would then use the summoned beast to destroy the Tree."

"Yuuji, I can't accept this idea."

Assuming that even Kubo-kun and Yuuji are able to knock down the Tree, I'll be surrounded by a bunch of furious, dangerous people, and my chances of surviving will probably be zero. Even if I do something beforehand to ensure my safety, once this idiot achieve his aim, he definitely won't be saving me after this.

"Ah, I get it. So that's why I changed the plan a little."

"Eh?"

Yuuji answers me so readily. Not good. There's something bad in this!

Right when I'm thinking of this and planning my escape,

"STOP IT, AKIHISA!! YOU TIED UP TAMANO AND WANT TO KISS HER NOW!!"

"YUUJI YOU BASTARDDDD!!!"

That disgusting yell of Yuuji echoes in the gym. Th-this is bad!

"Hm? Yoshii-kun? Where are you going right now in a hurry?"

"L-let go of me, Kubo-kun! If I don't hurry now!"

"Nice, Kubo! Don't let him get away!"

"??? I don't really understand..."

Kubo-kun tilts his head in confusion. Right now, I really hate how stupid he is for not being able to understand the seriousness of this situation.

At this moment,

"A~~~~ki~~~~hi~~~~sa~~~~kun~~~~?"

I can hear a terrifying voice that seems to be coming from underground. Oh dear dear dear!

"Hi-Himeji-san, you're..."

"Yes, I'm here. I thought it's time for you to be looking for me, so I was in the gym for quite a while."

"Ah, ahahaha. That's, quite a coincidence..."

"Yes, it is."

Himeji-san smiles.

"Speaking of which, Akihisa-kun."

"Y-yes?"

"I just heard some strange stuff just now. What is it?"

The smile never vanished from Himeji-san's face as she asks me this.

Th-this is really bad! If I don't do anything to save myself now!

"...Well, that's a joke, Akihiksa-kun. No matter what happens, I know what kind of person you are, so it's most likely a mistake..."

"Yuuji you bastard! Take responsibility and be my shield!"

"Hey, Akihisa! Stop using me as a shield now!"

"S-stop it, Yoshii-kun, Sakamoto-kun! This isn't the time for you two to be fighting now..."

I stand behind Yuuji, using him as a shield, and Yuuji grabs me, trying to push me onto the floor; as a result we're rolling around. At this moment, Kubo-kun, trying to stop us right now, got tangled...

""""Woah!""""

And the three of us end up rolling around.

"Owwww..."

"Ouch..."

"Ow..."

The three of us dust ourselves and stand up at where we're at.

At the same time.

""""..."""

The guys surrounding us are watching us silently. Th-this is...?

"I-I say, Yuuji, Kubo-kun...why is it that everyone seems to be giving us pitiful looks?"

"Wh-who knows? I don't under..."

"Yoshii-kun, Sakamoto-kun, it's hard for me to say this moment...but we rolled to the Tree together..."

""I can't hear you (at all)!!""

"Yoshii Akihisa-kun and Sakamoto Yuuji-kun of class 2-F and Kubo Yoshimitsu of class 2-A have arrived under the Mistletoe. Two of them will have to carry out the experience."

Takahashi-sensei's unsympathetic voice can be heard.

"Th-those guys...I thought they were usually fooling around together here and there. As expected..."

"And it's three of them...they're hopeless..."

"Tch! Don't look over there. Our eyes will rot!"

There's condescending looks from our peers surrounding us.

I don't want to admit it...thought I don't want to...but I have to...! We're under the Tree right now...!

"Uu...we got no other choice, but it's the rules. Kubo-kun and Yuuji, you two reached the Tree just a little earlier than me, so you two can experience the culture together."

"Yeah. Rules are rules, so take it like a man. You two can kiss together since you reached earlier than me, Akihisa and Kubo."

"Ah, no, I'm sorry, you two, but you two are the first to reach, Yoshii-kun and Sakamoto-kun, and I got involved to break you two up...I'm really sorry."

The three of us have 3 different explanations. What are those two saying? I'm the last one there, right?

"That's wrong! I clearly saw Yuuji and Kubo reach first! You two can kiss and don't get me involved. That's the correct decision!"

"Shut up, Akihisa! I say, Kubo! You're on good terms with Akihisa, right? Now everyone except for Akihisa can be happy now, isn't it?"

"Sorry, Sakamoto-kun. Such a pretentious request is against my beliefs. It's you

and Yoshii-kun who reached first...I'm so sorry."

"The decision has been made. Yoshii Akihisa-kun and Sakamoto Yuuji-kun of class 2-F, please proceed with the culture experience as soon as possible."

""NOOOOOOO!!""

"Please redetermine this! It's definitely Yuuji and Kubo-kun!"

"Don't joke around, Akihisa! You got kissed by Takashiro once, so there's no problem for you to take a second one! Just give up now!"

"I think we should have Aki-chan, Sakamoto-kun and Kubo-kun take turns!"

"Tamano-san!?"

"How did you break away from those sturdy knots!?"

"I managed to break out through brute force, but don't worry about such little details. More importantly, hurry with it! If you think you'll be embarrassed because you're both guys, let's have Aki-chan dress up as a girl again, shall me? Or rather, let's do it!"

"The second warning is over. It has been determined that the parties have no intention of doing so, and so the teachers will forcibly proceed with it."

""WE DON'T WANT THIISSS!!""

"Yoshii-kun, Sakamoto-kun, I don't have any grudges against you...but let's wash away the hatred of being toyed around by you over the entire year!"

"Fuse-sensei, your hatred is showing completely..."

The teachers call out their summoned beasts to proceed with it, and they approach us. Th-these guys...!

"Damn it! Looks like we can only go head on now! I don't care whether they're teachers or not, I want to send them flying and live on!"

"Well said, Yuuji! That's how it is! Can't we just destroy the tree and everything else to put an end to this barbaric activity!?"

We proceed to get into battle position.

"Aki-chan! You can't be embarrassed now! You have to accept this wholeheartedly so that your body and mind will be happy!"

At the same time, Tamano-san, who managed to break free of those restraints through some god-given luck or something, is charging at us through superhuman movements.

"Ah! Wait! If those two idiots are going to kiss, won't that mean that Kubo-kun's left alone? He's under the Tree now, so that means I can go up and kiss him! Nakabayashi Hiromi, charge!"

"Hey, look! A girl's running towards the Tree!"

"What did you say!? So that means if we go now!"

"Outta my way! Me first!"

"No, me!"

And a bunch of idiots proceed to charge in after Nakabayashi-san.

As for what happened afterwards, I can't explain it with the words I know.

Only one person, Hideyoshi, who never participated because he sensed danger, stares at our faces once everything's over, saying,

"I-I'd say, no matter what happens to you guys, I'll treat you guys as friends."

That stiff smile of his left quite a deep impression on me

"--So in other words, the Tree was destroyed from the base itself, and the gym was partially destroyed. Also, the event was ended when the teachers were mobilized to stop the rioting students, with F class being the center of it all."

"I see. Good work there, Takahashi-sensei."

"No, that was an expected outcome. It was nothing too difficult, but more importantly, principal."

"Hm? What is it?"

"How shall we deal with them?"

"Ah, yes. We can't let them off that easily."

"Principal, that profound smile of yours is?"

"It's nothing. Normally, I would have suspended them, but it just so happens that Winter break is about to start."

"I suppose. We can't suspend them during the Winter break."

"Well, we have no choice. In place of that, the punishment shall be that 'they have to come to school during Winter break'."

"...Is that so?"

"Is there a matter?"

"No. I think I have a rough understanding of why you organized the event, principal."

"What are you saying now? I'm just doing this for the students to enjoy themselves happily."

"Back then, you did make a grumble saying 'Those second year students, especially the F class students, have a lot more summoning wars than I

imagined. That's resulting in insufficient lesson time for them'."

"I don't remember that."

"Then I shall leave it as that."

After Class Seminar 2

CHARACTER PROFILE

Name: Kirishima Shouko

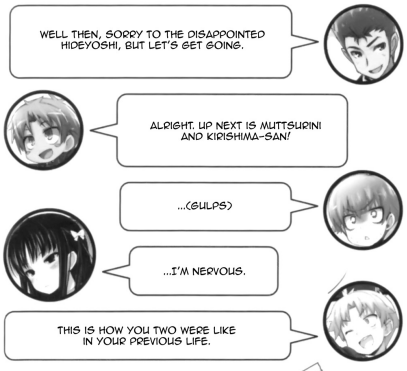
Nickname: Shouko / Class Rep

Gender: Female Age: 16

Trait 1: Likes Sakamoto Yuuji.

Trait 2: Smart, heavily in love

THOSE TWO REALLY HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL.
THE ONLY THING I'LL LIKE TO REALLY SAY IS THAT TSUCHIYA-KUN'S FAMILY NAME IS DIFFERENT NOW.
...THANK GOODNESS.
.....DO THEY HAVE TO MENTION ME AS A LECHER TWICE?
NOW THEN, IT'S YUUJI'S TURN.
HM? ME? WELL, I DON'T MIND. I DON'T REALLY GET DEJECTED AT ANYTHING ANYWAY.
THIS IS HOW YUUJI'S PAST LIFE IS LIKE!


WELL THEN, SORRY TO THE DISAPPOINTED HIDEYOSHI, BUT LET'S GET GOING.
ALRIGHT, UP NEXT IS MUTTSURINI AND KIRISHIMA-SAN!
...(GULPS)
...I'M NERVOUS.
THIS IS HOW YOU TWO WERE LIKE IN YOUR PREVIOUS LIFE.

AFTER CLASS SEMINAR 2

CHARACTER PROFILE

Name: Mutsu Kouta.

Nickname: Muttsurini

Gender: Male Age: 16

Trait 1: Lecher

Trait 2: Voyeurism

UH HUH...LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE REALLY SHOCKED.
SAKAMOTO-KUN USED TO BE A SENPAI? THAT'S A LITTLE SHOCKING.
..AN OLDER YUUJI...NOT BAD...
I SEE. NO WONDER HIS ATTITUDE IS LIKE THIS.
...I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY HE'S A DELINQUENT.
(COME HERE, COME HERE!)
ENOUGH ALREADY, HIDEYOSHI! DON'T WAVE AT ME LIKE YOU'RE WELCOMING A NEW COMRADE!
IN OTHER WORDS, YUUJI'S PAST LIFE IS AN EX-SENIOR WHO RETAINED A YEAR!

CHARACTER PROFILE

Name: Sakamoto Yuuji

Nickname: Senpai

Gender: Male Age: 17

Trait 1: UPPERCLASSMAN RETAINEE

Trait 2: Ex-prodigy, current delinquent

Me, Kindred Souls and Flipping of Skirts

僕と同志とスカートめくり

"I think it's very unfair."

On a certain day, after school.

I'm in the classroom, saying this to Yuuji and Muttsurini,

"...The structure of your brain?"

"That's the rudest words you said right from the get-go, Muttsurini."

"For a human, it should be your entire body functions."

"Are you cursed to not talk without insulting others or something?"

Besides, aren't you two like double that of scumbags and trash or something?

"So, what's the unfair thing about?"

Yuuji, who uses an insult as a greeting, enters the main point.

"Well, to put it, how we're treated."

"What is it this time?"

"...We're already used to it."

"What's with you two being so weak?"

"Or rather, I don't know what you're talking about this time."

"...Same."

Both Yuuji and Muttsurni are looking at me as though I'm saying something weird here. These damned champion failures!

"Now then, think of the school festivals, seaside trips, summer festivals and all sorts of scenes in TV dramas."

""...?""

YUUJI SAKAMOTO

Yuuji and Muttsurini look confused, but they proceed to do so anyway.

"Opening a cafe with cute girls wearing maid outfits, classmates who are shy because they're wearing swimsuits, cute girls who're embarrassed because they're praised for wearing a yukata. Do you have such scenes in your minds now?"

"Yeah."

"...Really great."

Good good. Then.

"Now how about you compare that with what we experienced over the past year doing the same things?"

Me dressed in a maid outfit.

Muttsurini who was forced into a female swimsuit to lure Yuuji and me out.

Yuuji who's dressed in an unsuitable yukata and forced to sit on the pageant stage.

"--Don't you find it weird?"

""It's weird!""

Both Yuuji and Muttsurini exclaim as they widen their eyes in unison.

"Why is it that we're the center of all the embarrassing things here?"

".....Swimsuits are supposed to be centered around girls...!"

"Yeah! That's what I want to talk about!"

No matter what it was, it was embarrassing to keep thinking about it. It was the same when we're playing strip poker. The girls should be shyly stripping and giving both Yuuji and me eye candy, so why is it that us guys have to be the ones naked and clinging onto Ironman!?

"Now that you mention it, it's weird...why were we so willing to accept that

treatment...!"

"...We're blind...!"

Both of them are shivering in rage. Right right. I'm happy that they understand that.

""This is--basically us being treated like Akihisa!""

"Wait a sec!"

It looks like these two really have a tendency to look down on me. I guess they're basically F class students given how they don't know that I'm better off than them.

"Anyway, this is what I mean by being unfair."

"I think I get the gist of it. You do make some sense from time to time."

"...These are the finest words you have ever said in this century, Akihisa."

"It's really great that you two can understand."

I shall pretend that I don't know that there's another 80 years and more in this century then.

"Now then, what will you do?"

"Hm?"

"Now that you said this much, you probably thought of doing something now, right?"

Yuuji stares at my face. Hm. That's a good question. In fact--

"Flipping skirts."

"...Let's do it right now."

"Sit down Muttsurini, I haven't explained anything yet."

As to be expected of Muttsurini. He already prepared 4 cameras in two hands the moment he heard those words.

"Akihisa, what about flipping skirts now?"

"Hm, well, the reason why we're being treated so unfairly is because we're cornered by the girls most of the time."

"...So we're flipping their skirts. Leave it to me."

"Wait. Anyway, let me finish what I want to say first.

I manage to get Muttsurini to chill. There's a high chance this guy has already given up on our premises a long time back.

"Maybe the reason why we're forced to wear female clothing or stripped is because they forgot how embarrassing it is."

"I see...so in other words, there's a need for those girls to physically understand how embarrassing that can be, I guess."

"That's how it is."

It's unexpectedly hard to make one embarrassed. However, they're girls wearing skirts, so there should be an easy way to do this, and that's to flip their skirts.

"...Akihisa, you just came up with the best idea--"

"Hah. How stupid."

"...!?"

Muttsurini's stunned by Yuuji's denial.

"We want to flip their skirts because of that? How stupid. I'm not doing it."

Yuuji puts on his backpack, and prepares to turn and leave.

"You loser."

I said it right at Yuuji's back, and at that moment, he stops, and turns around.

"What did you say, you punk?"

And then he gives me a dangerous glare.

But even so, I show no intention of backing down, saying,

"Isn't this the case? We're wearing pants, and they're wearing skirts. We're the ones with the advantage here, and you gave up on this sure-win battle! If this isn't the attitude of a loser, I don't know what else is!"

"Guh...!Th-that's...!"

Yuuji's hit in his sore point, unable to say anything.

"And furthermore, you didn't realize you're treated unfairly until I pointed it out! You're already a loser to the core!"

"Guh...ugh...!"

Now Yuuji's putting his hand at his chest, groaning in pain.

And to give Yuuji a further nudge, I stare at him right in the eyes, saying,

“Think about how strong you used to be, Yuuji. Earn you pride as a man back!”

“Earn back...my pride as a man...”

There seems to be something lighting up deep within Yuuji's eyes. I just need a little more push.

“Or are you going to be like that? Are you going to say that you can't do what I can do?”

“Th-that's impossible! I-I-I'll do it! Who's scared here!”

Yuuji gets up on his feet with enthusiasm. Alright! This is Yuuji!

“That's how motivated we need to be, Yuuji! Let's teach Himeji-san and the others the meaning of the word embarrassed!”

I too stand up.

But.

“...You two can go first.”

Muttsurini, who's supposed to be the most pumped up about this, lets out these unexpected words.

“Eh? Why? Muttsurini?”

“A man like you's going to back away right now?”

“...No.”

“Then why--”

“...I have, insufficient blood.”

Upon looking, Muttsurini already has a pool of blood at his feet.

“Muttsurini...you're already like this just by imagining it...”

“How much were you looking forward to it...”

“...(Shakes head)”

It's pitiful and awkward to see a pale Muttsurini shaking his head furiously here.

☆

"Sorry to make you work, Himeji. You've been a great help."

"This little is fine for me."

"Seriously...that Yoshii and Sakamoto...really will only do their best when they're trying avoid doing all the chores."

"Ahaha...I'll be going then, Nishimura-sensei."

"Okay, thanks."

This conversation can be heard from the staff, and soon after, Himeji-san opens the door and arrives on the corridor.

"Hey, she's here, Akihisa. It's Himeji."

"There's nobody around us. She's completely alone. How convenient."

"Shall we go?"

"Yeah. It's a rare chance after all."

"Understood. Hope you start off with a win.

Yuuji and I exchange fist bumps, and I move towards Himeji-san while feeling pumped up.

Himeji-san notices me, and greets me.

"Ah, Akihisa-kun, you didn't go back yet?"

"Well, I was chatting with Yuuji in the classroom."

"I see."

While we're chatting away while strolling down the corridor.

I focus all my attention on Himeji-san's skirt.

"It looks like Minami-chan is still in school too. She says she has something to do in the library."

"Eh~ is that so?"

The girls in Fumitzuki Gakuen wear wine-red skirts. Even though the obedient Himeji-san is wearing the proper attire, the skirt is somewhat short. If I'm to flip it up at once, I'll probably have a sight underneath it. This act itself can be said to be very easy to pull off.

The problem is--

"? What's the matter, Akihisa-kun?"

"..."

The problem is that standing in front of that person is causing me to feel guilty.

"Oh, yes, I just got some snacks from Nishimura-sensei. Since everyone hasn't returned home yet, shall we eat them together?"

"No, erm, well..."

"???"

Right in front of me as I look at the skirt is a confused looking Himeji-san. This is bad...! I'll definitely be suspected--or rather, I'll just be treated as a pervert...!

But even so, I"m still hesitant on doing it, and I can't take action. While I'm like this, Himeji-san asks with a gentle voice,

"Erm, Akihisa-kun?"

"Hyaa!?"

"I don't really know what's going on, but please calm down and walk at your own pace. If you need to say anything, I'll be waiting here."

Himeji-san's giving me a smile. That's impossible! Is she an angel!?

(No...I can't do it...)

While I'm mentally prepared to think that the operation has failed.

"What are you thinking now, Akihisa? Just get down there and flip it."

The devil inside me starts whispering to me. Wh-what is this devil saying now?

"Guilt? Can it be eaten? Do you know how much humiliation you suffered? This is an eye for an eye. Now that you're standing here, there's no need to be troubled."

And on the other side, the angel in my heart says,

"No objections."

A long time ago, I've been thinking that this guy isn't an angel.

But if I'm going to run with my tail between my legs, I'll be scolded by Yuuji "Is your resolve just this much, you trash?" It's payback for the usual, so let's do this!

"H-Himeji-san!"

"Hm?"

"Sorry--!!"

And then, I grab the hem of her skirt as I attempt to flip it.

"???"

Himeji-san stares at me, not knowing what's going on.

"What's the matter, Akihisa-kun?"

It looks like she doesn't know what I'm doing as she asks this.

"Eh? Ah, erm..."

"Ah, is there a loose thread on it or something? Thank you."

And she shows no intention of shaking off my hand that's grabbing at the skirt.

"Ahem!!"

I hear Yuuji's deliberate cough from the corridor. This is the signal 'get back here' we decided on beforehand.

"I-I'll be going then, Himeji-san. I just thought of something!"

"? Oh, yes..."

"See you later then!"

I wave my hand at Himeji-san, and quickly retreat.

""Tch, this guy's so spineless.""

The devil and angel inside my heart noted in unison.

"Is your resolve that much, you bastard?"

"I have nothing to say to that..."

We're at the stairway corner, continuing with our strategy Since I was the one who said this, I should be willing to suffer this scolding.

"But even so, I guess it's pointless if Himeji's being like that now."

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"Have you forgotten our aim, you dolt? Aren't we doing these things to have Himeji and Shouko recall those embarrassing things?"

"Ah..."

Speaking of which, that's really the case. Our aim isn't really to flip the skirt, but to do that.

"It's true that when I look at Himeji-san, she doesn't seem embarrassed in the slightest."

"Yeah. It's the dull Himeji after all. I'm guessing that even if you did flip the entire skirt, she'll be more surprised than embarrassed."

That'll be troublesome. We're just trying to make her experience the feeling of being 'embarrassed'. It's completely meaningless to shock them completely.

"But I can't think of any way that'll make Himeji embarrassed without shocking her."

"Yeah."

"So let's leave Himeji aside."

"Erm, that's."

"We'll switch targets to Shouko."

Does this mean Yuuji wants to aim for the other target, Kirishima-san? I can't think of any good plan against Himeji-san, so I guess this is fine too.

"You're right. Let's do this."

"It's decided that. --oho, speak of the devil. Shouko's here."

Yuuji too surges towards the corridor with momentum. Alright, show me your ability.

"Yo, Shouko."

"...Yuuji."

"Are you going back now?"

"...No."

Kirishima-san shakes her head.

"...There's the scent of Yuuji lingering in the school, so I want to catch you before I go home."

".....(turns)."

"Hey, don't run away, Yuuji!"

I whisper to Yuuji to cheer him on right when he's about to slip away.

And then, Yuuji seems to have thought of something as he turns towards Kirishima-san again.

"Ahahaha. Leaving that joke aside for now."

"...Ah."

Gacha. The handcuffs Kirishima-san has hidden on her falls onto the linoleum floor, causing a sound.

"..."

"You're fine! Don't be scared now, Yuuji! Get back your pride as a man!"

The hunter vs the skirt flipper man. Looking at the words themselves, it's hard to determine who'll win. This is tough.

"O-okay! I'll teach you who's faster now! Your restraining skills vs my hands!"

"...What are you saying?"

Yuuji, who'll normally run away immediately at this time, is actually facing Kirishima-san, and Kirishima-san blinks her eyes in surprise.

And right when this happens, Yuuji seizes the opportunity to reach for her skirt.

"...Ah..."

The calm Kirishima-san has great reflexes, and she understands Yuuji's intentions immediately.

And this Kirishima-san--

"...I'm somewhat confident of my underwear."

Having understood that, 'fufu' she puffs her chest confidently.

"..."

"..."

"...What's the matter, Yuuji?"

"...Nothing...at all..."

The way Yuuji looks as he returns back is clearly that of a loser.

"Isn't this weird? Why aren't those girls embarrassed at all?"

We entered an empty classroom for our strategy planning, and Yuuji got agitated. This really is a weird problem.

"Are we wrong with how we're doing this...?"

"No, not at all, I guess."

"Yeah."

If we go ask some passers-by, most will agree with what we're doing.

"Just an idea, I guess."

"Hm?"

"Do those girls not really understand how they are being treated here?"

"In other words?"

"There's a chance that they forgot that their underwear isn't meant to be shown in front of others, no matter how embarrassing flipping their skirts is."

"I see..."

It's impossible to suggest that they're ordinary girls. I can't understand--but those two may be like that. They didn't hesitate to strip during that strip doubt game after all.

"In Himeji's case, I'm guessing that she never thought of a possibility of you flipping her skirt. In other words--"

"I see. I know what to do."

"You got this quick."

"Sorta."

Both of us show grins on our faces as we leave the classroom together.

"...Mizuki."

"Shouko-chan. You haven't returned home yet?"

"...Yes. Have you seen Yuuji?"

"Sakamoto-kun? I didn't see him, but maybe he's with Akihisa-kun."

"...Is that so?"

Our targets are talking together in the corridor linking the new school building and the old school building.

"They're both there? How convenient."

"Yeah. Let's start."

Once we nod at each other to confirm, we proceed to stand in front of them

"Ah. The ones we're talking about."

"...Yuuji. What was that about?"

The two of them walk towards us in large steps, stopping at a distance where we can flip their skirts.

"Listen up, Shouko."

"...What?"

"Listen up, Himeji-san."

"? Yes?"

We take a deep breath--

"Look, Shouko. Underwear itself is meant to be kept hidden and not to be shown to anyone of the opposite gender so casually. As for why it is, that's because there is a possibility that it'll help something in the opposite gender get excited and also stimulate something that will make that person's body grow in some way."

"Look, Himeji-san, I'm a guy. Even if it's my classmates, I'm interested in erotic things as much as the next guy is, no, double of them. When I see a girl wearing

skirt, I've an urge to flip it up, and the devil inside me will ruin my common sense. It's wrong to think that anyone who won't usually do anything will remain the same today."

"...What are you saying?"

"I don't understand what you mean..."

""What we're saying--""

Yuuji and I reach for the girls' skirt with rugged determination, and we yell in unison,

""We're saying that we're going to flip your skirts (now)!!""

""..."

Both of them are looking at us worriedly. No no no! Our minds aren't weird in any way.

I'm worried that they're lacking in their danger senses. There's a need to add fuel to the fire!

"L-look at this, Himeji-san! Your skirt is about to flip! It's very embarrassing to have this done to you! You're troubled, right!?"

"Y-yeah, Shouko! You're being watched by us with lewd eyes now! W-what color is it today? Wahahaha!"

"Ah, yes, I'm bothered I have have my skirt flipped..."

"...I don't mind, but more importantly."

""...You have a teacher behind you.""

"YOSHII! SAKAMOTO! HOW GUTSY OF YOU TWO!!"

""Scram!!""

With our refined reflexes and judgment, we scamper away from the remedial teacher standing right behind us.

"These idiots can really run! I shall educate you thorough the values of morality and the iron fists until you die!"

"Isn't teaching by a fatal punch just being beaten up here!?"

"I can't imagine that to be a line from a teacher!"

"Enough already, obey!"

""NOOO!!!""

"What was that about, Akihisa-kun and Sakamoto-kun?"

"Probably some sort of a punishment game, or something."

Our great escape continues on for another 30 minutes.

"Haa, haa, haa...what...did we do wrong here...?"

We scamper around, and right now, we escaped to the archives of the library. Ironman probably never thought that we'll consider using the archives, so I guess we shook him off for now.

We collapse onto the floor, adjust our breathing, and carry out our third strategy meeting.

"What we did just now seems to have some effect on Himeji-san."

"I have the same thoughts."

Himeji-san just said 'I'm bothered if I have my skirt flipped'. If not for Ironman's

interference, there's a high chance of it succeeding.

"The problem is Shouko."

"Yeah."

On the other hand, I can't see any embarrassment from Kirishima-san. She just said '...I don't mind', and that's really something worth being happy--no, troubled over. With that, our original objective can't be fulfilled.

"Let's think of it in another way, Yuuji."

"What do you mean?"

"Kirishima-san won't feel embarrassed even if she has her skirt flipped, so we just need to do something that'll make her embarrassed."

"Hm. Logically however..."

"Logically?"

"I can't think of any practical methods."

Kirishima-san typically only shows a poker face, and she's good at everything, so nobody has seen her fail due to embarrassment.

But--

"It's fine Yuuji, I got a plan."

"Ohh? Really?"

"Of course. I did see Kirishima-san looking embarrassed. If there's an actual incident, I can guarantee it proudly."

"I can't really trust what you're saying...but we got no other choice. I'll just pretend that I'm bluffed and try this out."

"Alright, it's decided."

And so, we begin to make our preparations in the shadows of the books archives.

☆

"Wait, Akihisa, I can assure you that this is completely wrong."

"Noo, that definitely can work. Didn't you say that such things are best left to a 3rd party before?"

"But...!"

"Okay, just go already!"

"Guah!"

I kick a jittery Yuuji onto the corridor, right in front of Kirishima-san who's walking alone.

"...Yuuji?"

Kirishima-san stops once she sees Yuuji nearly trip over. Right, this is it!

"Take this!!"

From a blind spot, I pull off the haori draped on Yuuji like a mantle.

Appearing there is--a half-naked Yuuji with his shirt removed.

"...(poof)."

Kirishima-san's cheeks are reddening.

"Look, Yuuji! It's working!"

"Are you serious!?"

The one moment I saw Kirishima-san embarrassed was when we're playing that doubt game, the moment when Yuuji stripped.

In other words--

"Kirishima-san's embarrassed whenever you strip, Yuuji!"

"I didn't think it'll work...!"

"...(Gulps)"

"But Akihisa, Shouko's just watching me with glee right now."

"It's because you aren't stripping enough! Don't stop now, and take off your pants!"

"Wait, Akihisa! Isn't this very weird here!?"

"The weird ones are your heads!!"

""Retreat!""

It's probably because it's the second time Ironman appeared that this escape went unexpectedly smoothly.

“Damn it! I'm an idiot for believing in your suggestions!”

“You idiot!”

“I'll kill you.”

We return to the library again. Looks like there's definitely something wrong with that operation just now. I was thinking that it was a good idea.

“And besides, why is it that I have to strip to make her embarrassed?”

“You're right?”

“What do you mean by that!?”

I guess I better admit that we're a little off from our main objective.

“Well, at least we're still in one piece.”

“Though I managed to embarrass myself out there.”

Despite Yuuji complaining out there, that's because he accepted my idea and did it, so he has nothing to complain about.

Instead, he's muttering to himself.

“But why is it...I can't think of any good idea.”

“I thought it was a good idea to flip their skirts at first...”

Even if we pretend that it never happened, we'll be the ones losing confidence if we continue to fail.

“Hey, Yuuji, are we mistaken on something?”

“Mistaken? What do you mean?”

“Well, to put it...is it that flipping a girl's skirt isn't something worth being embarrassed to them?”

“What nonsense are you talking about?”

“Are you sure?”

“...”

Yuuji can't answer. Even if he wants to deny it, he doesn't have the evidence.

“Himeji-san can't understand, Kirishima-san isn't embarrassed at all, and nee-san doesn't seem to mind about it.”

“Kudou will even flip it to show others, and Hideyoshi probably won't feel embarrassed about it...”

The common sense in our minds is starting to crack and break apart. So girls are like this after all?

“Yuuji, are we really mistaken here?'

“Wait, Akihisa! It's too early to make a conclusion now!”

“But...”

“We got to be confident in ourselves! Amongst us guys and them, who are the ones with common sense?”

“Now that you put it this way...!”

I forgot that everyone around us is a weirdo. Yeah...! I can't just let myself be swept along with everyone. Even amongst us, I'm the only one here with common sense...!

“No, sorry. It's too much to ask common sense out of you. I'm being too harsh here.”

“Why did you add me to that list too!?”

While I'm saying this,

“Eh? Aki, Sakamoto? What are you doing here?”

Minami, probably checking on stuff in the library, just so happens to pass by us.

Hm...

“Sorry Minami. Mind checking if there's common sense in my head?”

“Aki's common sense? I'm fine with that, but it doesn't seem to be something down there--”

“No hard feelings there (flips)”

“Kyahh!!?”

Minami shrieks as she hurriedly presses down on the skirt I flip. Right! This is it! This is the reaction we want here!

“What are you doing here, Aki--!?”

Minami's so embarrassed her face is all red. I guess I had the right thoughts!

“See, Yuuji? I'm the one with common sense here!”

“Hm...guess I got no choice. I can only agree with you on this then.”

“If you have common sense, at least move away hand away from my skirt!?”

“Ah, yeah.”

Well, the fact that I have common sense is proven, so I follow what she said, and let go.

“Sorry Minami.”

“...”

Minami adjusts her skirt, and it doesn't look like she noticed my apologies as she flattens the wrinkles.

But it's really thanks to Minami.

“Thanks, Minami. I'm starting to have confidence in my own thoughts.”

“...”

Minami remains silent.

“We're worried that our common sense is shattered or something, so really, you've been a great help.”

“...”

Minami continues to remain silent.

“Also, please allow me to say this.”

“...What?”

“I didn't flip your skirt out of lewd intentions.”

☆

“You alright, Akihisa?”

“Yeah, I just have my limbs shivering and my fingertips numb and my vision all swaying about so I can't move straight, that's all.”

“Is that so? I guess that's fine.”

It's thanks to a passing teacher that Minami wasn't in the mood to execute me any further, and it ends with me with some minor injuries. Now then, I can continue with the operation from before.

"Found you, Aki!"

"Ack!"

It's not too soon after I felt relieved that I see a raging Minami charging over from the other end of the corridor. This is bad! If I get caught now, I'll be beaten so badly that I can't get up!

"Let's run, Yuuji--what the? He's not here!?"

"Akihisa! I'll escape this way, so you go the other way!"

"No! It's better for both of us to act together!"

"That's not it! It's better to scatter and ask for help like dolphins being pursued by carnivores!"

"That's just you wanting to save yourself right now!"

So despicable and shameless! That scumbag! Trash! F class!

"it's fine, Yuuji! There's only one Minami! We can work together to take her down. If we explain things--"

"You flipped! Onee-sama's! Skirt! You pigs! I'll trash you!!"

"...There's more now."

"...There's more of them."

The voice of the infamous berserker of class D can be heard. Information sure spreads fast, Shimizu-ssan...

"B-but! We only have 2 girls as our enemies. Using your arm strength, Yuuji, we probably can--"

"Yoshii!! Sakamoto!! What mischief are you up to this time, you bastards!?"

"...Yuuji. Being frivolous is the death penalty."

"I'll leave the rest to you, Akihisa!"

"Like I'll let you!"

With all my might, I dash after Yuuji who's trying to bid me goodbye.

It's probably because Yuuji realizes that he can't increase the distance from his pursuers (including me) that he escapes into an empty classroom.

"Ku...!"

Since Yuuji's hiding, I can't remain like this. With everyone me, I can only duck into the empty classroom...but I can't find anyone there. All I see are the open windows and the curtains fluttering thanks to the winds.

"Aki!!!"

It's the voice of the pursuers closing in. What do I do? Jump down? N-no,

there's...!

"Over here!"

I duck to the cleaning closet assigned to the classroom. If I escape from the window right now, I'll probably end up being chased by them when they can see me now. I might want to hide myself right now, and let Minami and the others keep chasing after Yuuji!

Having made such a conclusion, I then open the cleaning closet.

And inside it is,

"...There's someone inside."

There's Yuuji, who hid himself inside beforehand. Th-this bastard...!

"Hey! There's no other place here!"

"Ah! Wait! Go somewhere else!"

I press myself against Yuuji and force myself into the closet. Good thing it's empty, and the closet doesn't have any cleaning tools here, so we barely managed to stuff ourselves inside and lock ourselves.

(Don't squeeze in here, you bastard!! That's too reckless!)

(Shut up! You're the one who used me as bait and tried to escape freely!)

(You're thinking of the same thing anyway!)

We're arguing in the cleaning closet. At this moment,

"Akii! You're here, right!?"

Screech!!! Minami's rubber soles can be heard ripping as she arrives at the empty classroom. I guess her soles is melting because of the friction caused by the feet and the corridor. Seriously, for a girl in her ripe age, who is she?

"...Yuuji, I won't let you run away."

And she's followed by Kirishima-san. Shimizu-san and Ironman probably went somewhere else to look.

((...))

Yuuji and I hold our breaths. If we're discovered here, there's no way out. Even if I do use Yuuji as a shield to get past Minami, the second and third shots are ready to be fired, and I guess it can only be called despair.

"Huh? Minami-chan, Shouko-chan? You're being quite loud. Did something happen?"

"Ah, Mizuki."

"...We meet again."

Himeji-san appears as she just so happens to pass by this classroom. I hope Minami and Kirishima-san's killing intent can fade here...

"Listen to me, Mizuki, that Aki's really unbelievable."

"What's wrong with Akihisa-kun?"

"That guy flipped my skirt the moment we met."

"Ehh!? Really!?"

"Yeah. Seriously, he's like a kid..."

Now Minami's tone seems a little softer now as she lets out a long sigh. Huh? has she calmed down after talking to Himeji-san?

"So I'm thinking that when I find him later, I'm definitely going to snap his 4 limbs and 5 legs."

Sounds like the only thing calming down is her tone.

(What will you do, Akihisa? I think we should have you carry out a noble sacrifice to calm everything.)

(No! I'm surely that my limbs will be chopped up, so what's the fifth leg here!?

Is my head going to be chopped off as a result!?)

(Don't worry. I'll bring you to the infirmary later.)

(That's not a wound that the infirmary can deal with later!)

While we're having such an argument in the cleaning closet, Himeji-san's troubled voice can be heard.

"I-is that so...then Akihisa-kun's really intending to flip my skirt..."

"...Yuuji too was serious. It shocked me."

"Hm? What's the matter?"

"Ah, no. To put it..."

"...Yuuji and Yoshii intended to flip my skirt since a while back."

"Huh!? Those two did that to you two, not only me!?"

"I'll be troubled if they're serious."

"...Me too. I'll be a little embarrassed if it's in school."

Oh? This is...?

(Hey, Yuuji. This is.)

(Yeah, this is what they mean by going a roundabout way to get to the point.)

Thanks to Minami, it seems Himeji-san and Kirishima-san realize that we're really intending to flip their skirts. Maybe we'll be able to get our main objective...!

"Anyway, I got to look for Aki."

"Do you know where he is?"

"I'm guessing that they went into this classroom...and got off through the window."

Looks like they're thinking we got out through the window, just like we planned. It'll be perfect if Yuuji's out there, but I guess I can be happy with this.

"I'll go outside to look. If you do find Aki, Mizuki--"

Minami says that, and just when she's about to leave the empty classroom, Kirishima-san calls out.

"...Wait."

"? What is it, Shouko?"

"...No, the window."

"What's with the window?"

"--There's still dust by the window frame."

((Ehhh!?))

Yuuji and I gasp inside the closet. This is bad...! This is really bad...!

"Ah, now that you mention it!"

"There's dust on the frame."

"...It's impossible to jump over the window frame without touching it, so that means--"

"--Aki and Sakamoto are in this classroom, right?"

NOOOOO!!!

Now we're at our wits end. Escaping into this closet that's without a way out is going to turn out badly for us...!

(Damn it...! There's 3 enemies and one shield. Can I escape...!?)

And the scumbag of all scumbags is right beside me is trying his best to strangle me. Now even if I grab his shirt and try to use him as a shield, there's a high chance of his trying to fight back.

"...They're probably hiding."

"Yea. Where are they~?"

Through the gap in the closet, I can see Minami and Kirishima-san looking around the room.

And then, their eyes seem to stop here.

"But it doesn't look there's any place to actually hide."

"...(nods)."

It's a scene a hundred times scarier than the horror flick I saw a few days back. This is weird...! We just want to flip their skirts...!

Just when I'm mentally prepared to push all the blame to Yuuji like a man.

"Akihisa! Let's run!"

"Okay, Yuuji!"

""""Ehh!?""""

Such voices can be heard from the corridor.

"That came from the opposite corridor, right?"

"...When did they?"

"I won't let you get away!"

Minami and Kirishima-san run out as they say this, and Himeji-san too follow them out. We-we're saved now, right...?

We remain inside the room juust in case they come back to check on us, before opening the closet door. Once we're relaxed from the extremely nervousness and the cramped positions, we can't help but collapse onto the floor.

"I don't know what's going on, but we're saved..."

"Yeah..."

Yuuji too sits down beside me.

And then, appearing in front of us is,

"...Good thing I made it in time."

""Muttsurini!""

Muttsurini arrives with a blood bag and a little recorder.

"You saved us, Muttsurini! Thank you very much!"

"Thanks to you, we can get out without dying."

"...Don't mind."

Our savior answers with a cool look. Even though he has tissues stuffed in his nostrils to stop the bleeding, he's showing the coolest face to us right now.

"Then, what do we do next?"

Right now, we're having a meeting at the staircase platform right before the roof. It can't be considered the safest place right now, so we want to make sure we got a plan as fast as possible.

"What else can we do, Akihisa? You forgot what they said, didn't you?"

"I guess."

Himeji-san and Kirishima-san finally do understand that we're trying to flip their skirts, and they're starting to feel embarrassed. If that's the case, looks like we can only go forward now.

"But even though we say this, looking at the current situation, us working in a group is tantamount to suicide."

Right now, we just need to go about flipping skirts, and we need speed and stealth to do it. In other words, it's more convenient to work separately and not attract the enemy's attention rather than working together.

"Let's split then. I'll go for Himeji-san."

"I'll go for Shouko. What will you do, Muttsurini?"

"..."

Muttsurini's looking as serious as he can while thinks, and then, he answers,

"...I'll go with Akihisa...!"

It feels like he made this decision after much agony. Since I still have Minami and Shimizu-san pursuing me, it's great that I have Muttsurini following me right now.

"OK. Good luck."

"Same to you, Yuuji. Do your best."

"...If I can make it, I'll get over to you as fast as I can."

The three of us give fist bumps, and we proceed towards our different objectives.

“...Found them.”

“As expected of you, Muttsurini. Good work.”

We have two targets to look for. Muttsurini manages to find Himeji-san and Minami walking together in the old school building. Great.

“...What do we do?”

“Of course we go for the kill.”

Now then, if we just need to flip their skirts, there's no need to continue hesitating. We'll flip them. Go in as one will, and don't hesitate!

"...Another 15 seconds."

Muttsurini takes out his camera and installs a large lens in it. That's already the level of a pro, and I nearly mistook him for a hired killer or a super sniper.

"...Okay."

"Right, let's go--"

"Huh? Muttsurini-kun, Yoshii-kun?"

""--!?""

Right when we're about to charge about, a voice calls out to us, shocking us so much we jump. Th-this is bad! We got careless and didn't defend the back!

"W-well, Ku-Ku-Kudou-san."

"...What a surprise."

"? What's the matter? Why are you panicking so much?"

If she's suspecting us here, Himeji-san will find out. Got to outsmart her somehow!

"ImnotpanickingaboutanythingandIamlikeusualorratherIamcalmerthanusualhereIt

"..."

Kudou-san immediately shows me a doubting look. Did I fail?

(...Akihisa, saying too much will make you suspicious.)

(So-sorry about that, Muttsurni.)

(...Leave it to me.)

While I'm suspected, Muttsurini looks like he's about to do something to Kudou-san. How reliable...!

"...Kudou Aiko."

"Hm? What is it, Muttsurini-kun?"

"...Let us go."

Muttsurini lowers his head really deep. that pose looks like he's giving up his shame and honor to beg.

But even so,

(Muttsurini's fists are trembling now...!)

The enemy's Kudou-san, who has lots of incidents with Muttsurini, and even if his ugly side is to be seen, he'll give up his pride for his objective.

Yes. All that for the sake of--

"...Flipping skirts...!"

"..."

"..."

I guess, it's bad, to mention that.

(Muttsurini, you idiot! It's bad that I'm suspected, but confessing it directly is going to make it worse, right?)

(...Sorry, I got excited.)

(Though it's not a feeling I don't understand, that is!)

We tentatively look at Kudou-san's reactions.

"Muttsurini-kun."

"...What?"

After pondering for a while,

"Here (flashes)."

Kudou-san proceeds to lift her skirt.

"...Humph. I have no interest in spats here (Sploosh)""Yeah, Kudou-san. Even soOOOOOO!!!?""""

Kudou-san's not wearing her usual spats.

"I--am--joking. This is the swimsuit for club activities. Did I shock you?"

Kudou-san gives us a teasing look as she says this. I-is that so? Swimsuit? It's so sudden that I thought...

"Seriously, Kudou-san, don't tease us here."

"Ahaha. Sorry sorry. It's just a little joke."

"How rude, seriously."

Both of us continue to laugh.

"...This...isn't...something...that can...be...solved with...a joke...(splash)"

And over there is the life that's about to fade along with that little joke.

"Now then, Yoshii-kun, what's it about flipping skirts?"

"Ah...no, it's nothing that important."

"Um--hmmm!"

Kudou-san squints her eyes, giving me a suspicious look.

"I see. It's something to do with why Minami-chan's so angry now, I guess?"

"Retreat!!"

Finding that it's a waste of effort to confirm, I dash with all my might. Then, I can hear a deep, rippling breath near the back of my head. It's dangerous!!

"Akihisa! You can go after you leave your limbs and spine behind!"

"The fifth leg's the spine here!?"

Now that I'm sure it's a fatal injury, I can't allow myself to stop in my tracks, and I'm dashing forward with all my might.

"Gu...! Because of Tsuchiya's nosebleed at my feet...!"

"Minami-chan, what is that about?"

"Hear me out, Aiko! Those idiots were--"

I can hear Minami explaining the situation to Kudou-san behind me.

Now the pursuers have increased, and there's heightened security. Looks like it's going to be tougher approaching my target now...

"...Aki...hisa..I'll leave...the photos...to you..."

"Speaking of which, what's wrong with this Tsuchiya?"

"For added safety, I'll make sure he can't move (flashes)"

"...Ahh...aa.....! (Splatters)"

Speaking of which, I'm supposed to have my limbs and spine snapped, while Kudou-san's basically rewarding Muttsurini. Isn't this really unfair here?

"Did you hear? That Yoshii and some others seem to be going around flipping skirts."

"Nishimura-sensei says to contact him if we find them."

"And they were peeping a while back. Such a terrible bunch of guys...!"

I can hear such chatter from the corridor in front of the stairs. This is bad...it's getting harder for me to act independently. In that case, it may be getting hard for me to achieve my objective.

"Anyway, let's get away from here first."

I give up on going to the old school stairs, and instead head off to the new school stairs. Since I don't know where Himeji-san is now, I think it's better that I calm down first.

"If I have to go anywhere...to the gym first."

The pursuers are basically lurking around in the school buildings, and there are club activities held in the gym, so there's a chance they may not know anything about it. Even if something does happen, there are many places to escape to at this level, so I'll probably let things go as they are.

So I head towards to the gym.

I can't find any pursuers, probably because Yuuji's acting independently, so I head into the gym.

"Hm? What, isn't it Akihisa?"

"Ah, Hideyoshi."

Once I enter the gym, Hideyoshi, dressed in gym clothes, talks to me. Looks like the drama club is using the gym today.

"If you're here at the gym at this moment...you did something, I guess."

How sharp.

"Eh...ahaha, it's nothing much."

I can't help but stammer. As for why that is? of course. Think, we're flipping skirts right now. It's basically an act of outrage against women.

"--I can't say this to a girl like you, Hideyoshi..."

"...You said it, Akihisa."

"Hah!?"

Hideyoshi's squinting her eyes at me. This is bad. Looks like I'm blurting out my thoughts.

"T-this isn't it, Hideyoshi! Don't be mistaken! I'm not acting based on any lewd thoughts here!"

"Before that, I'd like to comment about the me in your heart..."

Hideyoshi's puffing her face, probably looking unhappy about this. Looks like it's something really unforgivable to a girl, and I blurt it out...

It's tough waiting here. Right when I'm about to leave, she says to me,

"Hm...in that case, I'll help you out, Akihisa."

"Eh?"

Hideyoshi places her hand on her chin. She's going to help?

"Really, Hideyoshi!? It's hard for me to ask from a girl though!"

"...Even if I have to change your understanding, please allow me to help you out."

I don't really understand, but many thanks here!

"I'm sorry about this, but is there somewhere for me to hide?"

"No no no, Akihisa."

Hideyoshi stops me from trying to hide. Hm? She can't help me out here, can she?

"I don't know what's going on, but you're acting to make sure you aren't discovered, right?"

"You're right."

Right now, I'm being hunted by a bunch of girls, and I have to approach some girls. I need to find a place to calm down and solve this paradox of an issue, think of a counterstrategy, and take action.

"In that case, leave it to me."

"...Hey, Hideyoshi."

"Hm. Not bad."

"...Hey, Hideyoshi."

"Maybe the fake eyebrows should be a little thicker."

"...Hey, Hideyoshi."

"I'll change your hair from your usual color and style into long black hair. Now Himeji and Shimada won't possibly notice it."

"I say, Hideyoshi!"

"What is it, Akihisa?"

"...Am-am I being bluffed here?'

Soon after I'm lead by Hideyoshi into the changing room, the drama club's props and costumes in Hideyoshi's hands end up changing my appearance.

"I'm not bluffing you. Isn't this very logical?"

"No, ah. Though that's a little..."

Putting on a disguise is the best way for me to escape from my pursuers and approach my target. Since the pursuers are basically all girls, I think it's easier for a girl to approach a girl than a guy. Maybe that's the case here.

But...

"Why is it that I'm wearing female clothing when I want revenge on them for making me wear female clothing...?"

"Don't think too much into it, Akihisa. Your brain will melt."

Is this what it means to be putting the cart before the horse?

"Okay, done. Even I too think of it as a complete work."

Hideyoshi nods as she looks at me. Since it's like this, I think it's too late to think about it. I try to convince myself of this as I continue to look at my disguise.

"Wow...there's no sign of it being like myself..."

"...What is that about, Akihisa? You don't sound happy at all."

Leaving aside the hair, even my face and eyes just doesn't seem to look like me now. It's said that Hideyoshi's so skilled in makeup it can be used for disguises, but this is a little hard, and I'm not sure what's that about.

"Well, let's leave it at that. I guess I won't be discovered now."

"Yeah, I'd assure you that."

The sight of Hideyoshi puffing his flat chest is really cute.

"Right, I'll be going then! Thanks Hideyoshi!"

"I'll hope that you'll have a good outcome out of this."

After thanking Hideyoshi, I proceed out of the changing room, out from the gym, and to the new school building. On the way back, I pass by a female student, but it doesn't look like I'm discovered here.

"Amazing...I don't feel out of place at all."

There's no need to run around like how I did just now, so I'm leisurely walking around, looking for Himeji-san.

At this moment, a cry can be heard from behind.

"The one there! Have you seen the trash who did something rude to my onee-sama!?"

"Eh?"

I nearly blurt out a shirek, and barely manage to keep it in. Th-this voice is Shimizu-san's...!

"Wh-who are you looking for..?"

"Do you understand if I say that it's the only idiot and trash of a boy in this school?"

Is she referring to me now?

"I don't know..."

"Is that so? You didn't see him? Bye!"

Shimizu-san merely ends off with that, and then charges off with amazing furor. The 'I don't know' I just said seems like 'I don't know what you mean' to me, but it probably doesn't seem to be this case for her. Is it relally that anyone would have realized it's me after those conditions are named...I guess?

"Speaking of which, she never suspected me..."

Shimizu-san exhibits an amazing sense of smell whenever Minami's involved, but even she didn't notice this. I'm guessing that I managed to disguise myself well as a girl. Can I, really succeed here...?

While I quietly cheer in my heart with a guts pose, I continue down the corridor.

At this moment, I see Tamano-san, who's of the same class as Shimizu-san, approaching from the front.

"Erm, sorry, Aki-chan."

"Ehhh!??"

I straightened my back the moment she talked to me. Am I seen through...?

"--Should be somewhere in this school dressed as a girl. Have you seen him?"

Tamano-san says to me while I'm so nervous. I-I'm not...seen through...?

"Erm, that's..."

"Ah, sorry. Aki-chan refers to that Yoshii-kun who's the 4 time reigning champion as the sou-uke and the one I really want to see crying."

"..."

Eh...! I want to retort...! I want to retort at that ranking...!

But if I do so now, everything will be wasted. I'll endure it for now, and ask about that issue tomorrow.

"I-I didn't see him."

"Really? Thanks?"

Tamano-san lowers her head without suspecting me.

"Speaking of which, am--is Yoshii-kun really wearing female clothing now?"

"Yes, I'm very sure based on my instincts. There's no doubt Aki-chan's wearing female clothing now."

Scary...! This girl's really scary...!

"Now then, I'll be looking for Aki-chan now. If you see him, tell me."

"Go-got it."

"Thanks. I'll be going then."

I see off Tamano-san as she waves at me. I'm feeling chilly in many ways, but my real identity's not being seen through, and even that Tamano-san with that amazing sixth sense of hers hasn't realized it. This can work...! This can definitely work...!

"In that case, I'll just have to find my target...!"

Assured of my victory, I proceed to look for Himeji-san bold.

After wandering around in school, I see Minami, who seems to have calmed down, her temper's not flaring anymore. Now's a chance.

"Erm, sorry."

"Hm? What do you want?"

I pretend to talk to her as a junior, and she hasn't realized it's me. As to be expected of Hideyoshi's makeup.

"I'm looking for Himeji-senpai."

"Ah, really? I'll lead the way.:"

"Thank you."

Success. Minami hasn't shown any signs of noticing me.

Minami leads me to the old school building, to the F classroom I'm so familiar with.

"Mizuki--someone's looking for you!"

"Eh? Ah, yes."

Inside the classroom is Himeji-san, and once she hears her name, she skips over to me.

"Hello, Himeji-senpai."

I bow towards her like a junior.

"Er-erm..."

"Sorry about this suddenness, but I'm looking for you."

I take a step towards her as naturally as I can, estimating the distance between

us. It's probably 60cm between us now, a distance where my hand can reach. Got her!

"--Actually, it's this--!"

Saying this, the hand I let down quickly rises up, like it's pulling her skirt.

However,

"Okay, that's enough already, Aki."

"Akihisa-kun, you mustn't, you know?"

"What!?"

That hand's grabbed by Minami in mid-air. Wh-what's going on!?

"Yo-you two knew that it's me...!"

"Yeah."

"The long hair does fit you, Akihisa-kun."

Himeji-san and Minami are smiling as they look at me. How's that possible!

"Why!? This is such a perfect disguise!"

"No, there's no real reason to it, right Mizuki?"

"Yes. There's nothing to it!"

While I'm looking all sheepish, these two are nodding away in front of me as if it's to be expected.

And then, at this moment.

"Got you, Shouko!"

"Eh?"

The voice of the idiot I'm already used to hear is right behind me. The moment I

have this thought,

"Take this!"

With much guts in his roar, the skirt I'm wearing is flipped high up.

""GYYYYYAAAAHHHHH!!!!""

The voices of me, with my skirt flipped, and Yuuji, the one flipping the skirt, echoes through this school that's after class.

"What the. It still ends up failing after all."

"Looking at this, I guess it's your handiwork after all, Kinoshita."

"It's really amazing, Kinoshita-kun's makeup."

"Mmm...I do have confidence in this, but you two did manage to see through it."

"Well yeah."

"Yes. We noticed it right from the beginning."

"As reference, do you mind telling me how you realized it?"

"Hm...how do I put it, huh."

"I guess if I have to say it, it is because of instinct."

""Because he's the one we like (after all).""

After Class Seminar 3

CHARACTER PROFILE

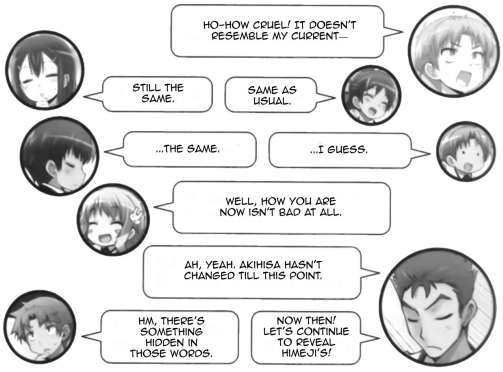
Name: Yoshi Naohisa

Nickname: Idiot, Trash

Gender: Male Age: 16

Trait 1: Idiot

Trait 2: Amazing idiot


HO-HOW CRUEL! IT DOESN'T RESEMBLE MY CURRENT—
STILL THE SAME.
SAME AS USUAL.
...THE SAME.
...I GUESS.
WELL, HOW YOU ARE NOW ISN'T BAD AT ALL.
AH, YEAH. AKIHISA HASN'T CHANGED TILL THIS POINT.
HM, THERE'S SOMETHING HIDDEN IN THOSE WORDS.
NOW THEN! LET'S CONTINUE TO REVEAL HIMEJI'S!

AFTER CLASS SEMINAR 3

ALRIGHT! NOW LET'S CONTINUE WITH THE INITIAL CHARACTER SETTING—!
SHIT.
WELL, WHATEVER...
T-THEY'RE SULKING...
WELL, LEAVING THOSE TWO ASIDE, THE NEXT IS—
HM? LOOKS LIKE IT'S AKI'S TURN..
EH? ME?
...HOHOH. I GUESS IT'S MY TURN TO REVEAL IT NOW.
HUMPH...! I-I'M OKAY! THE PAST SELF OF THIS NORMALLY KIND-NATURED ME IS PROBABLY NORMAL!
...WHICH MOUTH IS SAYING THAT?
NOW THEN, AKIHISA'S PAST SELF IS REVEALED.

SO IT LOOKS LIKE HIMEJI IN HER PREVIOUS LIFE LIKES ME
...THAT'S SHOCKING.
..MIZUKI AS MY LOVE RIVAL...
I-IT'S MY PREVIOUS LIFE! MY PREVIOUS LIFE!
ANYWAY, WHEN AKIHISA AT FIRST MISTAKENLY ASSUMED THAT HIMEJI LIKES YUUJI, IT'S...
JUST A LEFTOVER OF A PLOT POINT THAT WASN'T USED.
SPEAKING OF WHICH, AKIHISA'S NORMAL, UNPOPULAR, AND JUST AN IDIOT. GOOD FOR YOU, AKIHISA.
DAMN IIITTTT!!! I WON'T ADMIT IT!!!!

CHARACTER PROFILE

Name: Himeji Mizuki

Nickname: Hime

Gender: Female Age: 16

Trait 1: Timid due to her frail health

Trait 2: Likes Sakamoto Yuuji

Me, Christmas Eve and the Whirls of Conspiracies (Second Half)

僕と聖夜と
渦巻く陰謀
(後編)

"Well seriously, that was a cruel sight in the afternoon."

"...(nods)"

"Really? I was enjoying myself there."

It's night, right after the school activities have ended

Everyone's gathered at my house, celebrating the Silent Night.

"Baka onii-chan, thank you for inviting me."

"No no, I'm thankful that you're able to make it here, Hazuki-chan."

I pat Hazuki-chan on the head as she continues to thank me, and she closes her eyes comfortably like a cute kitten.

"Sorry about that, Aki, there's a lot of us here, and you had to invite Hazuki along."

"It's fine. Besides, the more the merrier."

This time, including the usual gang of me, Yuuji, Hideyoshi, Muttsurini, Himeji-san, Minami and Kirishima-san, there's also Kudou-san, Hazuki-chan and nee-san, so there's 10 of us. Looking at this, the living room's really dazzling right now. If the guys in our class is to see this now, Yuuji, Muttsurini and I will definitely be killed off by them.

"Aki, where do we place the gifts?"

"Ah, well, nee-san wants them gathered together, so can you put it there?"

"Okay. Come on, Hazuki."

"Alrighty!"

Minami and Hazuki-chan are each carrying a wrapped gift as they head to the next room. Yuuji, Muttsurini and Hideyoshi pass by them, and walk towards me.

"This gift exchange really does give a Christmas feel."

"...Not bad to have such things once in a while."

"I'm looking forward to see the unique traits of the chosen presents."

Since we have a rare Christmas party right now, I thought of coming up with this gift exchange. The budget for each person cannot be more than 2,000 Yen, and they can buy whatever they want. I wanted to limit the budget to within 500 Yen because of Hazuki-chan, but Minami said "Don't worry, I'll give her some money to spend." So I left it to her.

"You handed your gifts to nee-san?"

"Yeah."

"I just did."

"...(nods)."

Once she heard of my plan, my serious sister said 'in that case, there's a need to make sure nobody knows who prepared which present', and took up this role. Thanks to her, even I, as the organizer, don't know whose present is whose.

"Speaking of which, Akihisa."

"Hm? What is it, Yuuji?"

"You did mention that thing to Himeji before, right?"

Yuuji asks me, giving me a serious look.

And in response to that, I too give a serious look, answering,

"Well, of course...it's a matter of life and death."

Yuuji gave me a suggestion regarding today's gift exchange. I told Himeji-san beforehand that 'I want anything other than food'.

"...I'm relieved."

"If you didn't want it, she would have prepared something else."

"Especially since you have Akira-san making sure you have proper nutrition here."

"Yeah, thanks to that, Himeji-san doesn't have to worry about that."

The four of us laugh. Thanks to Yuuji, we can proceed to exchange gifts with relief.

At this moment, I see Himeji-san, who's returning after handing her gift to nee-san, talking with Minami.

"I put some handmade cookies inside."

"You made something, Minami-chan? ***I did too.****."*

""""..."""

The conversation between Himeji-san and Minami causes us to sink to the depths of hell.

"Wh-what's the matter with you guys, Muttsurini-kun, everyone?"

"Why are you covering faces and shivering, onii-chans?"

Kudou-san and Hazuki-chan are worried about us while we're crying. Looks like we're fated not to have a nice party today.

"Akihisa! Did you really tell her!?"

"I-I did! I told her 'we have food and drinks, so bring something else'!"

"...Then why did it end up like that?"

"The temptations of cakes and stuff is troubling~"

"...Sweets are different from savory food."

I can hear the conversation between Kudou-san and Kirishima-san giving me the answer. I-is it because of my poor choice of words...!?

"Well, it's Akihisa."

"Um, can't be helped."

"...Right decision."

"Nonono! This responsibility should be on Yuuji for not giving the right advice--"

"Oi Himeji! Akihisa wants to get your gift no matter what, so can you give some hint on the appearance?'

"Eh? A hint?"

"--Hold it right there Yuujiiii!! Let go of me, Hideyoshi, Muttsurini! I need to hurry and stop that idiot!"

"This is fate."

"...Just accept this obediently."

Hideyoshi and Muttsurini press me down while I'm trying to stop Yuuji. Is this the only moment when everyone's combination is perfect!?

"Ahaha. I'm happy that Akihisa-kun's thinking of me like this, but I think such cheating isn't right."

"That might be the case, but please understand that Akihisa's feelings."

"No, it's fine, because--"

"Give up already, Akihisa!"

"...You're being dishonest."

"It's not that kind of person, okay! This is a matter of my own life--"

"That's because I prepared one specially for Akihisa-kun."

"Well, Himeji-san, if possible, do you mind telling me the unique traits of your present?"

The moment I heard Himeji-san's words, I'm mentally prepared, and I ask her with a refreshed tone while Hideyoshi and Muttsurini are pulling me.

(T-this bastard...!)

(He wants us to follow him to his demise!?)

(...Evil...!)

Since my death's a done deal, I have to ask Himeji-san for the unique characteristics of her gift, and then I'll wait for Yuuji and the others to get that gift. As for why that's the case, we're buddies, sworn brothers.

We're to be born together on the same day, and die together on the same day.

"You can't do this, Akihisa-kun, Sakamoto-kun. This is considered cheating."

Himeji-san raises her finger to criticize me. That action's cute, but I can't forget the fact that she's trying to end my life here.

"Where is it?"

"No means no. A game is about following the rules so that it can be enjoyed, you know?"

Himeji-san leaves these words and turns away to leave to stop us from having such thoughts.

(((Saving my own life's more important than the rules...)))

And as we watch her leave, we're shivering in fear due to this death game that is about to happen.

☆

"""Merry Christmas."""

The Christmas Party begins in such an atmosphere.

We're chatting away happily, eating the food that's crammed all over the table.

"Eh? Did you bake this one, Sakamoto-kun?"

"Yeah, I got here early today, so I borrowed his steam oven. It's an event food, so I added lots of spices to add flavor. Does it fit your tastes"

"...It's nice."

"Yeah. I didn't expect Sakamoto to cook such a large thing until it's so flavorful."

"Controlling the heat is as easy as adjusting the settings. If I have to mention any tips to this, you have to make a slit on the turkey, and then add sliced almonds and salt inside."

"...The breast meat isn't dry."

"I added butter and olives there, or else it'll be too bland."

The turkey Yuuji cooked does feel like it's a 'manly cuisine', but he really put in a lot of effort controlling the heat and flavoring. This guy's always good at making large portions of food and hot pot.

"Hazuki never thought you would be able to cook this well, big brother. Amazing~"

"You can quickly pick up on it if you help out often at home, pipsqueak."

"Seriously, Hazuki isn't a pipsqueak."

"Hahaha, is that so?"

Yuuji teases Hazuki-chan for quite a bit as he laughs. An only child like him is

probably overwhelmed by cuteness when he sees a little sister character like Hazuki-chan.

"Did you make this bread-like sweet, Shimada?"

"Yeah, it's called Stollen. Back in Germany, we eat it during Christmas."

"A German pastry? Since you made it, Minami-san, I suppose it has a local flavor to it."

"I do like this one a lot~the sweetness and texture really is nice~"

Kudou-san digs into the sweet Minami made called the 'Stollen', giving a satisfied smile. This Stollen refers to a German bread filled with all kinds of dried fruits and nuts inside, baked and then layered with icing sugar. After it's done, it is left aside so that the flavor can be absorbed, making it sweeter. I had a taste, and it's true that the surface feels fluffy and crisp, while the inside is soft, and has a fruity flavor to it, which blends in perfectly with the sweetness, making it really delicious.

"So, did you make the rest, Yoshii-kun?"

Kudou-san eats the Stollen as she looks at the food on the table, saying this,

"Yeah, I guess."

"Akihisa-kun's good with this as usual."

"Nothing to complain about Aki when it comes to this."

"...Yoshii will make a wonderful bride in the future."

"I don't think I can be happy about this praise…"

Should I have gone for large food stuff like Yuuji did? Thinking about this, I look at what I did.

Smoked salmon and olives salad, Lasagna with shredded cheese and meat sauce between the layers, Quiche with bacon, wieners and ham, and I also tried making some Bagna Càuda. There's a lot of people here to eat, so I can try some cuisines

I hardly try, so I'm sorta happy about this.

And while we're laughing,

"Speaking of which, Himeji, Shimada."

"Hm?"

"What's the matter?"

"Do your presents need to be kept cold?"

Yuuji's ignites the start to the present hunt (shoving to each other?)

Normally, in such typical battles between us, the first one to attack will often be crushed by others. Even though this should be the usual pattern,

(Right, good going, Yuuji…!)

(Nice question there.)

(...Won't make it suspicious.)

This time, we're quietly cheering for Yuuji in our hearts.

Actually, we're in an alliance to collect intel right now. As for why that's the case.

(It'll be terrible if Shimada's sister is to get that one.)

(We got to make sure Hazuki-chan doesn't get to draw that…!)

(...That's not something that can be eaten by kids.)

As for why that's the case, it's because Hazuki-chan's around. Leaving aside the other girls who went through the purgatory of the black hot pot, it's too much to let her eat Himeji-san's cooking when she's so young. That's why we've decided to worked together to find Himeji-san's present, and then make sure Hazuki-chan won't draw it.

First, we'll work together to find Himeji-san's present. And then we'll betray

each other.

"? My present?"

"? What do you mean?"

"No, well. Didn't you girls say that you made some good? If it's raw or something, won't it be ruined or something?"

Yuuji's smiling. It looks like he's really worried about their foods.

This guy's probably trying to get some intel. If they're to suddenly exclaim "Sorry, I forgot! I'll put it in the fridge no!", there's a huge chance that we'll get to see what the present is like, and even if we can't see, once it's refrigerated, we can hold it in our hands and find out. If we have something like 'it's okay, I got a coolant', we can also consider that.

"I'm fine. It won't be ruined.

This answer is to be expected. What we heard from the conversation was that Minami made 'handmade cookies', so there's no need to refrigerate them.

"Yes, me too."

"I see."

Looks like Himeji-san's food doesn't need to be refrigerated either. Anyway, we got a hint.

"Then, any problems with how it's placed?"

"...There's a chance it's upside down."

This time, it's Hideyoshi and Muttsurini asking.

Himeji-san and Minami ponder for a little while,

"No problems at all."

"Me too. It's more or less okay, I think."

Now we have more clues. Even if it's tilted, I don't think it'll spill out.

Okay, now I should be asking from another direction.

"Speaking of exchanging gifts, I forgot to confirm this with you."

"Yes?"

"What is it, Aki?"

"I intend to let everyone pass the presents around as the music play, so are your presents heavy?"

How about I ask about the size and weight?

"I'm okay."

"Um...mine's a little large, but it's fine."

(Alright!)

We can't help but do victory poses in our hearts. Now we know Himeji-san's present is 'a little large, but it's not so large and heavy for Hazuki-chan to carry'.

""""..."""

The four of us exchange glances, and we nod. This is where we'll stop asking; if they're getting suspicious, they'll start to feel uneasy about moving the presents around, and it'll be troublesome if we end up doing a lucky draw.

"Oh yeah, Akihisa. I feel like having some coffee now. You mind if I borrow your kitchen?"

"Ah, I'll go brew some. I feel like having some anyway."

"Is it okay? I'd like to go too."

"...Me too."

We call out in unison as we leave our seats. Our strategy meeting will be held in the kitchen. We have more than enough clues now.

☆

"What do you guys think?"

"What else to think about?"

"Yeah, it's very obvious now."

"...(Nods)."

The four of us are gathered in the kitchen, discussing. Based on what we got, we're exchanging suggestions on what the dangerous item might be.

1. The item doesn't need to be refrigerated.
2. The item doesn't come with a coolant.
3. The item isn't heavy.
4. The item's a little large .

Looking at these 4 hints, the food mostly likely here is--

(((--A Chiffon cake…!)))

Our eyes glow. Based on the information we obtained, the ingredient fees and others, we can guess that it's something similar to that.

The result of our teamwork allows us to obtain some critical information.

In that case, what's next is--

"Himeji-san's present is probably some handmade chocolate or something."

"No. It's probably a *senbei* box or something, right?"

"Surely it has to be mixed jelly."

"...It's definitely biscuits."

And then, everyone's trying to bluff against each other, vying for supremacy. The special job is done, and we're now enemies. This is an important battle on how to stuff the dangerous item to each other.

"It can't be *senbei*. This isn't the season for it."

"Won't the mixed jelly seep out if it's put sideways?"

"Biscuits can't possibly be this bad."

"...If it's chocolate, you have to refrigerate it."

Everyone's denying each other's ideas. Oh dear.

"Seriously? Everyone has different suggestions."

"That means we can't be sure of this."

"I'd say it can't be help."

"...We just have to leave it to luck later."

The four of us are giving each other the 'guess we got no choice look'.

Ahaha. Seriously.

"(Bam) nee-san! I guess I should take over hosting the presents after all!"

"We can't let you do that, Akihisa! Akira-san! Leave it to me!"

"What are you two say? I'd say that I'm most suited for doing this!"

"...This is should done by the quiet and fair me…!"

All of us are trying to be the first to get to nee-san, who has the presents arranged in the next room. We're tripping each other, pulling at each other's shirts, and after a long tussle, we manage to make it to her.

"It's fine. I can do it all myself."

""""..."""

That one line from nee-san caused us to return to the living room dejectedly.

"Now then, how about we start exchanging the presents?"

""""Okay.""""

""""..."""

This line from nee-san cause us to be on thin ice. Every action we do from now on with be linked directly to Hazuki-chan and our lives, so this is to be expected.

"When I play the music, please pass the presents around to the one beside you. Once it stops, you may accept the presents you are holding."

Once she said this, nee-san switches on the radio power. I guess it's we're using that to play the music.

"I didn't know what kind of music I should play at first, but I chose a song everyone is very familiar with, and everyone can enjoy it."

"(Beep)! I'll sing a birthday song for nee-san! Haapppyy birsuday! Tooyooouu♪

`HappiiBirsuday2yuu--"`

"NOOOOOO!!!"

A familiar singing voice can be heard from the music. Isn't that the birthday present I gave nee-san when I was in elementary school?

"Stop it, nee-san! This isn't something for others to hear!"

"But look, Aki-kun. Don't you see everyone enjoying this a lot?"

"(Snickers) That's quite some good singing there, Akihisa."

"(Snickers) Older sisters will be happy to receive such gifts from their younger siblings."

"(Snickers) Yoshii-kun really was cute back then."

"Stop ittt!!!"

It's inhumane to sacrifice me for everyone's enjoyment! Shouldn't everyone be part of the punishment so that everyone can enjoy it?"

"How about this CD?"

"No, I think this CD is better."

"...No problems."

"Is this what baka onii-chan sang when he was younger? Hazuki-chan wants to hear this too"

"No, don't do that! Play another tune, please!"

"Really? I guess I don't have a choice then."

Nee-san tinkers with the radio, and switches the tone.

And then, a customary Christmas song echoes, one that can normally be heard on the streets.

"I'll sing the next one then! Jingle Bellsz♪ Jingle Bellsz♪"

--And again the singer is me.

"..."

"Erm, Akira-san. Akihisa-kun has been squirming and shivering over there with his head low for quite a while…"

"He's probably too anxious to receive the present that he's jumpy now."

This is...this is…!

"I can't leave the music to you, nee-san! I should be the one playing the music in the first place!"

"Oh, wait, Akihisa."

"Don't you you can get away with trying that in this mess."

"...Can't be careless here."

Tch! It was a perfect chance here!

Left with no choice, I can only head into the room to get a mainstream media CD, and I put it inside the player. In the meantime, nee-san brings in the presents from the next room.

"Now then, everyone. Please take a present, and once the music starts, pass it to your left."

""""Okay~""""

All the members are seated in a circle, the presents put on the laps. The music is set to play until it stops at the set time. In fact, if I know when the music stops, I can control where the presents go, but…

"What's the matter, Aki-kun? Why are you looking at nee-san like this?"

"Ah, it's nothing.."

Nee-san's giving me that same old poker face again, and I can't tell how many minutes she set. That player isn't precise to the second, so I can only just try to dump the dangerous present to a certain person.

"Now then, is everyone ready?--Start."

She may have been a student who studied overseas, but nee-san's 'start' certainly sounds Japanese. And with this command, the music begins.

We start to pass the presents to the ones on our left, and receive the presents from our right.

"This really is nostalgic."

"I haven't done this since I was in elementary school~"

"Hazuki did this last year, you know?"

Himeji-san, Kudou-san and Hazuki are having their cheery conversation.

As for the 4 of us, we're widening our eyes, glaring at each other with eyes of one with a deep, deep grudge.

There are 10 presents, It's quite a few of them, but luckily, half of them are small enough to be lifted with one hand.

Amongst the 10, 5 of them are large boxes, but 3 of them aren't tall enough. If it's a Chiffon cake, it's probably a little taller. Himeji-san's present is probably one of the remaining 2 boxes then. One of them is green, and the other is red. Which one is the real one?

The green box is passed to my hands, and once I receive it, I hand it to the side. 'clack', at this moment, it sounds like a little box of something inside it.

(This is...well,it's definitely the red one!)

If a soft thing like a Chiffon cake or something else is put into the box, normally, it would be fastened down to prevent it from moving. It sounds like something hard, so I can guess that the green one is the safe one.

"...!"

I sensed some presence, and so I lift my head.

At this moment,

"(Swoosh)"

"(Swoosh)"

"(Swoosh)"

Yuuji, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini immediately avert their eyes. These guys...they're watching me to see if I found anything dangerous!

Looks like those 3 have determined their target as the red one. Now all that's left is to push it onto each other. The key to winning this is to see who ends up with the red box in the end.

On a side note, this is how we're seated,

Me → Yuuji → Kudou-san → Nee-san → Minami → Himeji-san → Muttsurini → Kirishima-san → Hazuki-chan → Hideyoshi → Me

For me, as long as I can control the time, I'll just hand the bomb over to Yuuji when the time's almost up.

"~♪~♪~♪"

A relaxing, fast-paced song can be heard from the audio player.

And when I look at the clock, I see that 1 minute and 50 seconds have passed. In other words, if the time is set at 2 minutes, there's still another 10 seconds…!

The one holding the red present right now is probably nee-san. Looking at how things will keep up, it'll probably end up with Muttsurini or Kirishima-san. After Kirishima-san would be Hazuki-chan and Hideyoshi, and before her would be Muttsurini. Please let Muttsurini receive the present.

While the three of us, the safe ones, are planning,

"...Tempo up."

"~♪~♪~♪"

""""What!?""""

The rhythm suddenly got faster, and everyone starts to pass the presents faster.

With 5 seconds left, the present passes Hazuki-chan.

With 3 seconds left, the present passes Hideyoshi.

With 1 second left, the present reaches me.

"Here, Yuuji, for you!"

"Woah hoo, my shoelaces…!"

"You aren't wearing it at all, right!? You aren't wearing shoes now, right!?"

And right when I'm about to hurry and pass off the box, Yuuji suddenly bends down, putting his hands on his shock. Y-you bastard! You don't want to take this one!?

The clock stops right at 2 minutes, and the red present still remains in my hands.

"~♪~♪~♪"

However, the tune continues. I-I'm saved…

"Well, this is for you, Yuuji. I know you aren't wearing shoes. Don't try and pull a fast one next time."

"Tch...I got it, Akihisa. That was just a little joke."

I warn Yuuji not to try the same bluff again, and he clicks his tongue, showing a smile so that the others won't find out. This bastard…! Don't think I'll forget about this…!

"I'd say, Muttsurini, it's a foul to use the remote there."

"...Sorry."

Muttsurini doesn't sound apologetic in his apology. This guy realized that he's in danger, and used the remote to forward the tune. I can't relax at all…!

"~♪~♪~♪"

The audio speed is readjusted again, and the presents are passed at normal speed.

The next danger period is 3 minutes. If it's too long, we'll be tired, and if it's too short, we can't get excited. I can expect 3 minutes to be the most likely timing.

Right now, the time is 2 minutes and 15 seconds. It'll take about 5 seconds to pass a present around, so if I deduct that time from 3 minutes, divided by the number of people--

"1~ 4~ 3~ 7~ 6~"

Who's muttering some unrelated numbers there!? I can't count!

"?...what's the matter, Yuuji?"

"No. I just thought of counting out of a sudden.Don't mind me."

This guy...this guy's been getting in my way all this time…!

Well, even though I can't calculate it, I can at least guess where it's going to go. Looking at this pace--if we're going in this order, it'll be Hideyoshi, me, Yuuji and Kudou-san.

(--Eh? That means…?)

Suddenly an idea appears in my head.

Yuuji already predicted where the present will reach, and it's right near me.

(Speaking of which, if I'm in his position.)

Right when I'm letting some ideas swirl around in my mind, I try to pass the present to Yuuji, who's beside me.

"For you, Yuuji--ow…"

"Woah hoo, sorry, Akihisa."

Bam, Yuuji's elbow hits mine. Thi-this is…!

"Ow, looks painful…"

"Are you two alright?"

While everyone's attention on us, the present stops moving.

"Ahh, yeah, I'm fine."

Yuuji passes off the present to the next one.

At the same time, the game continues.

Wanting to be sure, I have a look at Yuuji's face.

At that moment.

"(Smirks.)"

This guy's giving me such a look, his lips curling in an evil manner. As I had expected!

After seeing Yuuji's expression, there's no doubt in me. This guy's definitely manipulating the time here.

If he can tell where it's going to me, Yuuji will definitely make sure that I end up doing it. Why do you say that I'm so confident of that? Of course that's because I'll do the same if I'm in his position.

The reason he knocked my in the elbow is to buy some time. In other words, if this keeps up, if nothing else happens, the red present will reach my hands.

--Right, if nothing happens.

We continue to pass the presents along with the rhythm.

And after circling around once, the red present reaches my hands again. Yuuji and Hideyoshi are staring at me with shocked eyes.

"Wh-what's going on…!?"

"Akihisa, you bastard…!?"

"Hm? What's the matter?"

It's no wonder why they're so shocked. The present that's supposed to be in

Hideyoshi's hands is now in Hazuki-chan's hands.

"You bastard, you skipped a present, didn't you…!"

Yuuji glares me with vengeance.

Yup. Once I knew that Yuuji's manipulating the time, I use the chaos to keep the red present in my hands, and pass the present that was passed to me directly to Yuuji--simply put, it's a 'present swap'.

Right now, my safety can be assured. As for why.

"It's your fault for timing this too well."

"Damn it, you bastard…!"

Right now, the time's 2 minutes and 50 seconds, another 10 seconds till 3 minutes. The red present is now with nee-san.

There's still another 7 seconds; It's passed from Minami to Himeji-san. 5 seconds left, Muttsurini receives it. At the rate this is going...the dangerous item will pass by Hazuki-chan, and then it'll hit Hideyoshi. This is to be expected. The present that was supposed to reach me was switched by me, and it's a spot later.

Because of that, there's nothing anyone can do. Hideyoshi will receive the red present right at the 3 minute mark. Sorry, Hideyoshi! You got to blame Yuuji for not being willing to receive it. I'll go down to hell to meet you later, so before then, wait in peace…!

The clock placed by the living room is pointe at 3 minutes. If the time ends at 3 minutes, everything will be over!

...I gulp nervously, waiting for it to change.

"~♪~♪~♪"

And the music continues on.

"Eh…?"

"What the? It's not over yet?"

"...Unexpectedly long."

Now then, is the time set to 4 minutes? The presents continue to be passed.

The red present passes by Hideyoshi, and lands in my lap.

"~♪~♪~♪--..."

""""...Eh...?""""

The music just so happens to stop.

"Okay, let's stop."

Once nee-san stops, all over us look stunned as we look down at the presents on our knees. I'm holding the red box, something I can't deny no matter how I look at it. The time's also 3 minutes and 2 seconds. What's going on?

"Oh deary me. Sorry to all of you."

Hideyoshi scratches his head, saying to us while we're look confused.

"--It's a very familiar tune, so I couldn't help but sing along."

"Eh…!?"

That means that Hideyoshi has been singing ever since the tune ended!?

"I see. Hideyoshi-kun is good at singing after all."

"...It's true that I didn't feel that the music was coming from the player, but from beside me."

"Really? Hazuki can't tell any difference from the CD."

"Kinoshita-kun's amazing~"

"Even I didn't figure it out."

"Don't praise me now. I'll be embarrassed."

Hideyoshi looks embarrassed as she pinches at her face.

"I was too mesmerized with the song, and I accidentally sang too much of it...well, it's fine, right?"

"Yeah. There's no need to be so fussy about it. It's fine."

"Yeah. Nobody will want someone else's presents like a spoiled brat. It's fine."

"...No problems."

"No, but--"

And it looks like they're trying to shut down my objection.

"It's fine, Hideyoshi."

"...There's no need to do this again."

Yuuji and Muttsurini beam as they give their thumbs up.

"Let's unwrap our presents now."

"""Okay."""

Anyway, everyone's present is decided, and it's now time to observe everyone's reactions of either joy or sadness...guess I got no other choice here. I'll just prepare to accept my doom. It is fated for me. Another one's nothing to me!

"I'll start opening my present then."

Minami unwraps it, and takes out the contents.

"Hm? is this a DVD?"

"Yeah. I'd say that I chose the 'Recommended Theater Performances DVD'."

Hideyoshi's present is a DVD with dramas inside it. It's really just like her.

"It's an all-ages work that can be shown to families. It's interesting, so please laugh to your hearts content."

"Eh~ it's perfect, Hazuki. Let's watch it once we get back."

"Okay!"

Minami and Hazuki-chan looks rather happy. Even I'm feeling healed just thinking of them enjoying the DVD together.

"Eh? Hideyoshi and I nearly got the same thing."

"Hm? Did you buy a DVD too, Akihisa?"

"No, that's not it--But nee-san's present is from me."

"Is that so? I'll open it then."

Nee-san then unwraps the present.

Inside it are several books.

"It's the manga set I recommend. There's a lot of interesting ones, but the ones I recommend most are the stories where the underground monsters are captured and cooked into delicious food--"

There are women and a kid participating, so I chose about 3 copies of all-ages manga and put them in."

"I see. It's a cooking manga."

I never thought nee-san would get it, but despite how old-fashioned she looks, she does read them, so it's probably something she likes.

"I suppose that the hidden meaning in these lines is that you wish for me to start

cooking, Aki-kun."

"No, the ingredients used here are all fantasy…"

I have a heartfelt thought that it's really a good thing that I didn't choose any actual cooking manga.

"Then it's my turn next--eh?"

Kudou-san reaches out to unwrap her present, only to stop.

"What's the matter, Kudou-san?"

"It's nothing. I just thought that I drew my own present."

Then what's the matter?"

"Erm...ah, it's Muttsurini-kun's right? How about you open yours?"

Kudou-san says as she watches the present in Muttsurini's hands.

"...???"

Once he opens that present.

"...Hm."

"Ahaha, it's the same present after all."

Kudou-san and Muttsurini have the same presents, digital photo frames. These photo frames can display digital photos on the screen. That definitely suits Muttsurini there.

"...Got to mention, that's from me.."

"I know right? It felt like it's something I would expect from you, Muttsurini-kun."

Both of them chose the same presents, and they manage to give it to each other. The chances of that should be really low here.

"I got it. Well, this is for the better, I think. I did choose this present based on my own preferences after all."

Kudou-san's beaming away.

"Eh? Do you like such things, Aiko?"

"Sort of. I do find cameras, little recorders and stuff very interesting."

I can't help but recall that peeping incident. Now that she mentioned it, Kudou-san does use such stuff…

"This is amazing Both of you chose the same presents and exchanged it. It's like you're a fated pair!"

"Eh? Really? What do you think, Muttsurini-kun?"

"...That isn't true."

"Ahaha. You don't have to be so embarrassed.

Kudou-san is definitely teasing Muttsurini here.

At this moment, Kirishima-san is probably affected by Hazuki-chan's words 'you're a fated pair', and she slowly reaches her hand out, putting it on her present.

"...I'll open it too."

Kirishima-san has a present the size of a pencil case.

Whose present is that? Just as everyone's wondering about this, Yuuji raises his hand unhappily.

"Ah, it's from me."

"...Fated."

"It's just a coincidence."

"...The thing inside definitely goes well with me."

"Relax. That's impossible."

Kirishima-san probably felt some form of telepathy as she eagerly opens the wrapping.

Once she opens it, she find that it's a pretty looking paper knife.

"I found it at a convenience store. How about it? I think it's rather decent at this price, isn't it?"

Yuuji proudly mentions this.

However, I have a different opinion on Yuuji's present.

"Seriously...you can handle most of the stuff well, Yuuji, but you're so useless when it comes to such stuff."

"Hm? What do you mean, Akihisa?"

"No. A high school student, a girl, probably have no use for a paper knife even if she receives it, right?"

"...Ah."

Yuuji gives a 'I dun goofed' face. He probably saw that it was nice looking, and forgot the nature of it. Amusingly, he was unexpectedly a romanticist when confessing to Kirishima-san.

"So-sorry about that, Shouko. I'll get you something else next time."

"...No, this will do."

Kirishima-san happily puts the paper knife in front of her chest.

"...This is, the best thing for me."

And then, she happily repeats here.

"You sure? I can take that and give you something else."

"...There's no need for that. This is what you found and like, Yuuji. And--"

She holds the grip firmly.

"--This is you informing me of your determination, Yuuji, 'If I have a mistress, use this to kill me'."

"Alrighhhhtttt I'm definitely getting you something else tomorrow."

I see. If I think about it this way, Kirishima-san definitely can use this paper knife. The cool flair really does suit her well, and it really has a lot of benefits, she can't really use cellphones, often have to deal with letters and books, and it can be used to assassinate Yuuji.

"...I'll go if it's a date. I don't want anything else."

"A date? What are you saying?"

"...that."

Kirishima-san points at Yuuji's present, saying,

"Hm? What's with this?"

"...It's from me."

"..."

"...So I say, it's fated."

Yuuji, having this pointed out to him, silently unwraps it.

"A pair of tickets to a movie, huh…?"

"...(Nods)."

"Thanks Shouko. I'll sell these important babies online."

"...We can watch it together."

"Wait wait wait! This paper knife isn't meant for you to do that!"

Yuuji has a paper knife right at his neck, and it's giving a chilling shine. He got

movie tickets from Kirishima-san, and if he refuses, he'll be punished by her. I see.

"I really feel that there's a strong fate at work here."

"It's basically indicating Yuuji's future here."

"...No way to escape."

"Are you guys are saying that I'll be stabbed to death one day!?"

This is his destiny. Just as some living things get killed by their fangs piercing through their heads, Yuuji will probably be fated to die under a certain person's knife.

"Then, what's...mine?"

Hideyoshi gives a nervous look for an instant, and reaches out to the present. The reason why she's so nervous is because she got the green box. The danger is only second to that of my red box. There's also a chance that the box she's holding is the really dangerous one. If possible, I hope she gets it.."

"Hm? This is a muffle and a reindeer badge?"

"Ah, that's from Hazuki!"

"..."

"Aki-kun. Why do you look so disappointed?"

Well, I knew that…

"It can be used for this season. Thanks."

Hideyoshi places the muffler on her neck.

"It really does fit you, Hideyoshi-kun."

"...Just nice."

"Yeah. Nice fit for you, Hideyoshi?"

"Really? Thanks then."

(((--You're really like a high school girl.)))

I guess it's better not to mention our true thoughts. If we do so, Hideyoshi will either be angry, or dejected.

"But this muffler does look really impressive. Was the budget enough?"

"It's enough. The old uncle at the shop gave Hazuki an added bonus, and it's really nice too~"

The bonus probably refers to that badge. I never thought Hazuki-chan would buy such things. Once I have a thought that Minami may have helped her out, I'm starting to feel fuzzy inside my heart.

"It's my turn next."

Himeji-san is holding a box that's 15cm wide. What's inside it?"

"Erm~ this is...gloss, I guess?"

"...Gross?"

Muttsurini asks as he doesn't have an impression on this thing. Seriously, Muttsurini, you don't understand this thing?

"Isn't this something we normally hear in class, how to make our execution methods more gross?"

"You're stupid, Akihisa. This means a unit of dozens here, you know?"

"You guys, if you don't know, just say so."

I feel that I heard of that before, but…"

"...Lip gloss."

"Basically, it's something similar to lipstick, Muttsurini-kun."

"Right right, I was about to say that just now."

"Nearly got it."

"Well, if you guys say so, I'd guess that's it."

I see. Lipstick huh? I learned something now.

"So may I know who gave this present?"

"Me."

In response to Himeji-san's question, nee-san raises her hand. Looking at this situation, I'm guessing she's the only one who would choose a lipstick.

"A professional makeup artist I know recommended this for me. It's targeted at teenagers, and doesn't have color, so it's rather decent."

"Wow…! Thank you very much!"

Himeji-san happily takes out the lipstick (is it a lipstick?). The other girls are staring at her present enviously.

"W-wait a sec, nee-san?"

"What's the matter, Aki-kun?"

"It's okay that Himeji-san just so happened to get this, but there are guys here, you know?"

"Yes, that is correct."

"But what do you intend to do if Yuuji, Muttsurini or me gets it!?"

"Akihisa."

"Kinoshita, it's useless to retort about this now."

"That's right, Kinoshita-kun. It's too late."

"..."

While I'm giving her the question 'how can boys possibly use lipstick', nee-san's giving me a confused 'why are you asking such a question' look.

"I think this isn't much of an issue…"

"Eh? What?"

"I suppose that all of you will have more opportunities to cross-dress, Aki-kun."

""""..."""

I guess that us, who are unable to retort back on the spot, really went through lives far different ordinary high school boys.

"Anyway, what did you get, Akihisa-kun?"

"Hm? I'll open it now--eh?"

"? What's the matter?"

I can't help but turn to look at Himeji-san. She's giving me a stunned look.

Wa-wait a sec! This is weird! That question Himeji-san just mentioned, doesn't that mean that what I'm holding isn't her present?

"Ho-how can that be!?"

I frantically unwrap the present.

Inside the red box is,

"A cap...and cookies…?"

"Those are from me."

The present's from Minami.

In that case, that means the one who got Himeji-san's present is--

"Hazuki's present is from pretty onee-chan's then!"

"That's right, but it's embarrassing to be called this…"

What is this!? Hazuki-chan got the present! That's the worst case scenario here!

"Eh? But…"

"? What's the matter, baka onii-chan?"

Hazuki-chan's holding a small package that can fit a book ticket. It's hard to imagine something so small containing a Chiffon cake or any other handmade food. Did Himeji-san only make some handmade food for me, and there's none here?

"Well, it's fine."

"???"

Hazuki-chan can't help but tilt her head in confusion. Too bad I couldn't bring Yuuji and the others for the ride, but I did manage to save a young life.

"Aki. Do you not want my present…?"

Minami's giving a conflicted face, looking at me worriedly. Oh, no no.

"That's not it. Not at all. What I was worried about is now settled."

"? What are you saying?"

"It's my own stuff. Don't mind."

There's nothing to worry. Again, I look at Minami's present.

Inside it is a cool looking, caramel-colored duckbill cap.

"Heh~ a cap? How about this, does it suit me?"

I immediately take it out, and fit it on me."

"Yep, it's fine."

"Ahaha, I'll be spoiled by those praises there."

The cap color feels unisex, and the size is adjustable. I'm guessing that Minami's tastes and feminine charms are rather high since she's able to choose such a present.

"But it's an outlet item, so there's a seam at the back."

Now that she mentioned it, I have a look at the back of the cap. It's true that it's in an obvious spot, but even so, nobody can see it when it's inside, and I really think it's not a problem.

"Thanks Minami. I'll treasure these well."

"I'll be worried if you treasure the cookies well though?"

The cookies are shaped as stars, fitting for Christmas. There's fruits and chocolates inside them, and they're really delicious. I'll enjoy them well.

"Now then, it's time for Hazuki's present!"

With an enthusiastic voice, Hazuki-chan begins to unwrap her present with glee.

While Hazuki-chan continues to do so, I whisper softly to Himeji-san beside me,

"What is your present, Himeji-san?"

"Erm, I gave her something a little big."

"Eh? But it looks very small here."

"Yes. That's why--"

Himeji-san looks at the package Hazuki-chan is holding.

"Wow, a Christmas card. Erm…'present exchange'?"

"""What?"""

"Ah yes, the Christmas card is inside it for another purpose."

We've been had! We never thought of this before! She said that it's fine that it's large, and that's referring to how it can be given to that person later!"

"I'll go get it for you, Hazuki-chan. Please wait."

"Okay! Hazuki will enjoy it!"

Once Hazuki-chan's responded, Himeji-san proceeds to the next room to get the actual present. And while we're all watching, the four of us are,

(Akihisa, go for it!)

(I don't wanna! I got one for myself! Muttsurini should do this once in a while!)

(...The iron-stomach Hideyoshi should go.)

(This is the time for the strong Yuuji with strong resistance to take action!)

We're all pushing the responsibility of who's going to eat it. Looks like we got to snatch the present before it ends up in Hazuki-chan's mouth…!

"I kept you waiting, Hazuki-chan."

"Thank you very much."

Himeji-san hands the present over, and Hazuki-chan receives it with both hands.

(In that case, we're all going to die together. Once it opens, we're dealing with it!)

(No other choice here!)

(...Got it.)

(It can't be helped.)

"It's large. What is it?♪"

Hazuki-chan hums as she unwraps the present.

And appearing from within--is a large bear plushie.

"Wow~ Isn't this the bear P-san?"

""""Eh…?""""

All of us are dumbfounded.

"W-wait, Himeji…"

"Didn't you say it's handmade?"

"Yeah. This is my handmade plushie, you know?"

Now that she mentioned it, I recall the conversation between Himeji-san and Minami.

"I put some handmade cookies inside."

"You made something, Minami-chan? I did too.."

It's true that Himeji-san never said that it was handmade.

"Really~ Thank goodness."

"...I was already mentally prepared to have hospital food for a week."

? Why are all of you looking so relieved?"

Himeji-san looks confused as she watches us relax. We thought things will get out of hand. It's really a divine joy that there's no homicide on Christmas Eve.

"Thank goodness, Hazuki-chan."

"Yes."

Hazuki-chan looks delighted as she hugs the plushie. In any case, thank goodness.

"But well, if we're to get the plushie, it'll be awkward for us."

"...That's fair."

Thinking about this, it's as what Yuuji said. Cute goes with cute, and if we got it, we'll be somewhat troubled by it.

While we're laughing away, Himeji-san tells us with a smile.

"It's fine. In such a situation--"

""""Hm?""""

"I have another present prepared for this."

Bam, there's some box placed in front of us.

"Hi-Himeji-san, this is…?"

"This is a present if it's a boy."

She answers this, puffing her large chest proudly.

I see. This is to be expected of a careful person. She prepared that gift voucher and would have given different presents based on who that person is. She put in quite some thought into it.

But regardless of that.

""""..."""

We're all staring at the box in front of us.

"I say, Himeji."

"...One question."

"What's in this box?"

"Yes. I heard that boys don't like sweet stuff, so I made some Chiffon cake that's not too sweet!"

"Good for you, Akihisa."

"You're one lucky guy, Akihisa."

"...Rejoice, Akihisa."

"No, I can't finish this alone. It's a rare chance, so let's tuck in, everyone."

"It's fine. I prepared another one just for you, Akihisa-kun!"

"You hear that, everyone? Thank goodness!"

"No no no, I think it's best for the both of you to share this love together."

"Of course! It's just an appetizer for you, Akihisa!"

"...and the taste will be different."

"Not at all! There's definitely the same things inside them, right, Himeji-san!?"

I ask.

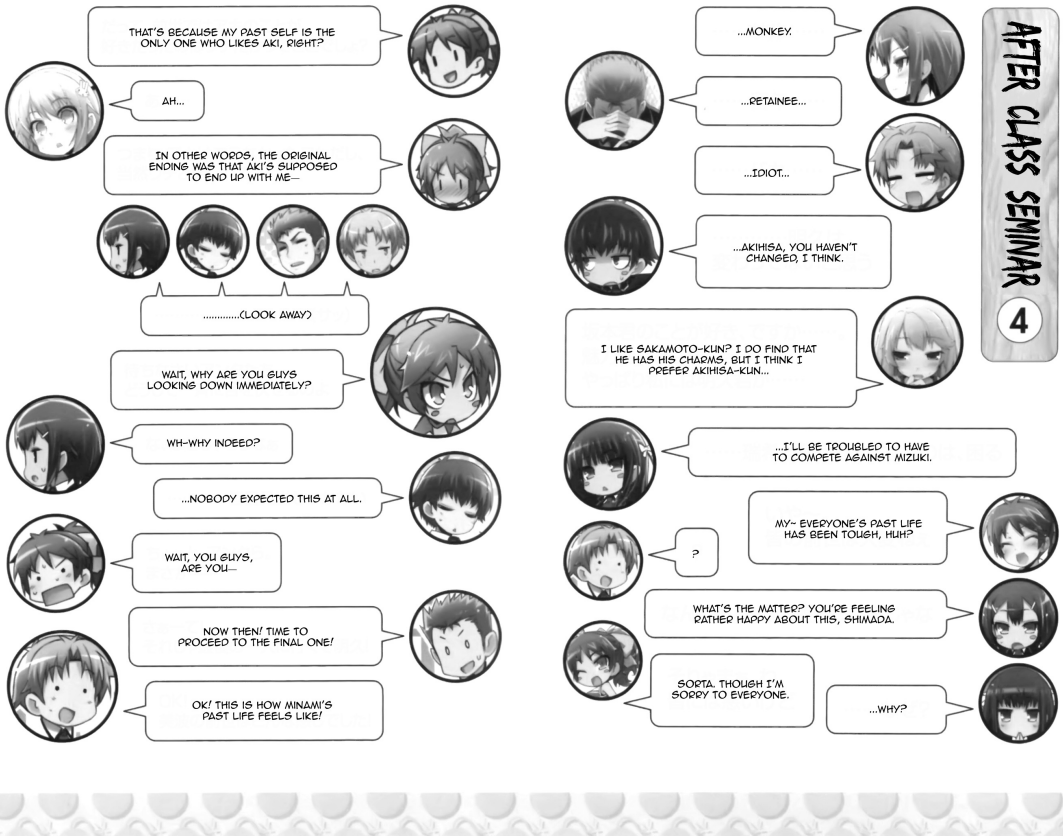
"No, there's definitely a difference.:"

Himeji-san shyly answers.

"What I'm giving Akihisa-kun is infused with lots of love."

This really is what they call the killing words, I guess.

After Class Seminar 4


THAT'S BECAUSE MY PAST SELF IS THE ONLY ONE WHO LIKES AKI, RIGHT?
AH...
IN OTHER WORDS, THE ORIGINAL ENDING WAS THAT AKI'S SUPPOSED TO END UP WITH ME—
.....(LOOK AWAY)
WAIT, WHY ARE YOU GUYS LOOKING DOWN IMMEDIATELY?
WH-WHY INDEED?
...NOBODY EXPECTED THIS AT ALL.
WAIT, YOU GUYS, ARE YOU—
NOW THEN! TIME TO PROCEED TO THE FINAL ONE!
OK! THIS IS HOW MINAMI'S PAST LIFE FEELS LIKE!
AFTER CLASS SEMINAR 4
....MONKEY.
...RETAINEE...
...IDIOT...
...AKIHISA, YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED, I THINK.
I LIKE SAKAMOTO-KUN? I DO FIND THAT HE HAS HIS CHARMS, BUT I THINK I PREFER AKIHISA-KUN...
...I'LL BE TROUBLED TO HAVE TO COMPETE AGAINST MIZUKI.
MY~ EVERYONE'S PAST LIFE HAS BEEN TOUGH, HUH?
?
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU'RE FEELING RATHER HAPPY ABOUT THIS, SHIMADA.
SORTA. THOUGH I'M SORRY TO EVERYONE.
...WHY?

CHARACTER PROFILE

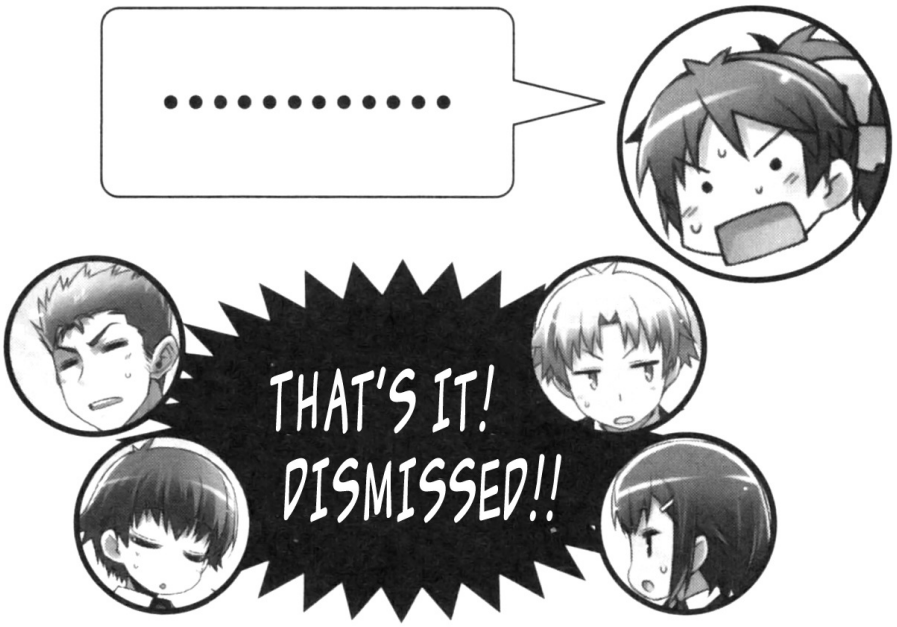
Name: Shimada Ryo

Nickname: Prez

Gender: Male Age: 16

Trait 1: Forbids couples.

Trait 2: FFF Inquisition president



Me (Watashi), Graduation and Parting words

私と卒業式と贈る言葉

'**"...On this day, as the graduation ceremony arrives, I suppose that all the seniors seated here have their own dreams and wishes as they embark on a new journey."**'

The atmosphere in the hall is solemn as Shouko-chan's delightful voice echoes.

The New Year in January passed, Valentine's Day in February passed, and it's now March. Right now, we're seated in the gym where the graduation ceremony is being held, hearing Shouko-chan's farewell speech.

(Hey, Mizuki.)

Minami-chan, seated one row in front of me, secretly turned her head around and whispered to me.

(Hm, is there something, Minami-chan?)

To avoid disturbing the ceremony, I too answered softly.

(Don't you find it strange that those two guys actually participated in this willingly?)

Minami-chan said this as she looked at Akihisa-kun and Sakamoto-kun seated behind me.

I turn around to look, and found those two looking tense as they listen to Shouko-chan's farewell speech.

(That might be true.)

It may be rude to Akihisa-kun and the others, but I'm thinking the same as Minami-chan. Normally, they'll be yawning away, looking bored, or sleeping away.

"...Our trustworthy seniors have given us guidance in our studies and club activities, at times kind, and at times strict."

It is the graduation ceremony, but it is not for us, but for the 3rd years. As 2nd years, I suppose there is no need for us to be so nervous in this ceremony.

Instead of looking relaxed, the 2nd year students are giving off a completely different vibe--everyone present seems to be listening to Shouko-chan's speech normally.

"...From now on, we shall inherit the passions of the seniors and strive to improve this school."

Everyone else, who should be sleeping away right now, is nervous for a reason.

Soon after the summoning wars between school years ended, the 3rd years went into a self-studying period when they could attend school whenever they felt the need to, and hardly attended school.

Because of that, the 2nd and 3rd years never met again ever since that showdown, and this ceremony would be a reunion after so long.

"...We had all sorts of things in the colorful school lives we spent with the seniors."

According to Sakamoto-kun,

"This is the one time the 3rd years finally met us after the exams, and they got a grudge with us. We don't know when they'll exact revenge on us."

That was what he said.

The graduation ceremony is filled with such sparks as a volatile atmosphere lingered. Akihisa-kun and the others are looking very tense, ready for the skirmish that might occur at any given moment.

And in this situation, everyone is concerned with Shouko-chan's farewell speech, and the parting speech from the 3rd years.

Any words from Shouko-chan, who's acting as the representative now, will be seen as what the entire 2nd year is thinking. Because of that, any single mistake can be seen as an excuse to start a quarrel. That's what those two said.

While it's true that this may happen in this school, will the 3rd years really do this...?

"...I'm really grateful to the many wonderful memories given to us."

Shouko-chan's clear voice echoes in this tense atmosphere.

Unlike everyone else, I'm not really on my guard, so I can hear her ears clearly.

I continue to hear her delightful voice present that farewell speech as I recall all the memories I had with the 3rd years.

The earliest was the summoning tournament during the school festival.

The latest was the summoning war between the school years.

We had the baseball summoned beast tournament with the teachers.

And we had a test of courage using the summoned beasts.

There is a lot of memories related to the 3rd years that I can think of. They are interesting memories, and also painful memories, sad memories, and happy memories.

"Hau...!"

(Wh-what's the matter, Himeji-san!? You got Anemia?)

(N-no, I'm fine...)

I thought of something unnecessary.

I wave my hand at Akihisa-kun, who's seated behind me and speaking to me because he's worried about me. I then turn to look back at Shouko-chan on the podium.

"Our hearts feel nostalgic and lonely as we recall every happy day we spent with our seniors."

Such a textbook farewell speech came from Shouko-chan's mouth. There is no way for Shouko-chan to be careless with her words, and Akihisa-kun and the rest must be worrying too much--

"She actually said 'feel nostalgic and lonely'...?"

"Is she mocking us for losing the summoning war...!"

"If the one talking now isn't a girl, I'll have beaten him up...!"

--It doesn't look like they're worrying too much, I guess...

I show a grimace once I heard the mutters from the 3rd years seated there. Shouko-chan never had such thoughts, but it feels like the seniors have misunderstood that. Is that what Sakamoto-kun is worried about?

But even so, they aren't doing anything drastic, and Shouko-chan continues with her speech.

"...All the students here will like to wish a great future for our seniors...and to congratulate everyone for graduating."

Shouko-chan gave a pretty bow at the end, and ended her speech.

"Thank you very much, Kirishima-san"

Once the announcement was made, I could heard a long sigh of relief from someone. Even I, who wasn't that worried, let out a soft sigh. That's because even if I do think nothing will happen, this is still our school after all...

"They didn't do anything during the speech."

"Yeah. In that case--"

"...It's probably in their farewell speech."

"I guess."

Akihisa-kun and the others behind me seem to be nodding to each other to confirm something, and I can't help but turn around to ask them,

"Erm, do you think it's possible that everything will end nicely...?"

""""Not at all.""""

An immediate answer, huh...

"Speaking of which, Himeji-san, do you know how much the 3rd years really hate us?"

"Sorry, but we're as hated as Marie Antoinette during the French Revolution."

"...We have a long history between us."

"Is that something you can say about yourself...?"

Marie Antoinette was executed during the French Revolution...

While I'm looking dumbfounded, Akihisa-kun continues,

"And there's no way they won't do anything when you look at how they act against us till this point, right?"

"Yeah. Something's definitely up."

"...No way this ends peacefully."

"Hm...is that so...?"

If it's like before, it's really hard to imagine everything ending peacefully...

"--To continue, the reply from the 3rd years."

And while we're talking, Takahashi-sensei's voice echoes through the speakers.

"It's here."

"Yeah. Who's delivering the speech?"

"...Doesn't matter who it is."

The 3rd years' farewell speech.

It's supposed to be Takashiro-senpai, the representative of the 3rd years, delivering the speech, but he left Japan before the graduation ceremony to enter another university, so the speech will be made by someone else.

Akihisa-kun and the others thinks that it's very likely one of the senpai TokoNatsu pair (?) will do it.

"It's possible that it's those two, but they're A class guys. It's not inappropriate for them to be replacements."

"Well, there's nobody more appropriate than them to taunt us into a bloodbath."

"...Those two have the god-given talent to annoy anyone."

I don't think these are words used to praise others...

The 2nd years got more anxious as a result.

And then--

"We shall have the representative replacement of the 3rd years, Kogure Aoi-san. Please."

"Of course."

""""...Eh?""""

After hearing the announcement Akihisa-kun and the others were taken aback.

Unlike what everyone expected, the 3rd year delivering the speech isn't any of the TokoNatsu pair, but Kogure-senpai. She is a beautiful senpai with alluring and feminine charms. I think she's very suited to do this in front of everyone else, but--

"...No, way...!"

"Did they just choose the wrong person...!?"

"What's with those taunting us with a beauty...!?"

Akihisa-kun and the others were shocked. Didn't they think that the other side never thought of taunting us...?

"The cold winter season has come to an end, and I can feel the warm footsteps in Spring. On this beautiful, blustery day, we are graduating."

Kogure-senpai continues on with her speech, not noticing the reactions of Akihisa-kun and the others.

Her words showed no malice to us, just a thanksgiving from the seniors to all the juniors.

"I still remember the opening ceremony 3 years ago, and in a flash, we have arrived at this very day. There is a saying that time goes by as we're having a good time, and as the joyful, fruitful days passed one by one, I truly understand these words."

Leaving aside Akihisa-kun and the others who are still in disbelief, I silently listen to the poised words from Kogure-senpai's thanksgiving.

Every word she said moved my heart magically.

"During these three years, we met all kinds of people...and all kinds of events happened."

Leaving aside the 3 years, this one year alone was eventful.

I went through the first summoning war from the moment I was streamed into F class in Spring. I still remember very well how we nearly beat A class, only for

our *Chabudais* to be downgraded to cardboard boxes.

We had a tragic incident when the 2nd year boys were suspended from school during the school training trip. Once the suspension ended, there was the major incident of Minami-chan kissing Akihisa-kun.

"..."

Minami-chan, seated in front of me, enter my eyes.

I didn't know what happened between Minami-chan and Akihisa-kun back then. Later on, Minami-chan told me what happened. "I like Akihisa-kun." Though Minami-chan was sorry after realizing my feelings, she really did understand why I like him, and she answered "Then we're rivals". We're friends, and rivals. I guess that this isn't really the same, but it's probably the relationship Akihisa-kun and Sakamoto-kun has, and I'm a little happy as a result.

"The encounter and stories we shared form precious, indispensable memories for us today."

Ever since the summer vacation ended, we had summoning wars every day. Our aim was always the same as it was before--to beat class A. Akihisa-kun and the others were worried that I would damage my body as I'm too weak. However, the time back then could be said to be my liveliest moments.

Because--I'm happy to be working hard, moving forward to the same goal with everyone.

In the end, our duel with class 2-A was interrupted, and it became a war against the 3rd years. We managed to win, and earned the facilities. It took us a long while, but we finally managed to achieve our objective.

"Ever since then, we welcomed all kinds of changes. There are changes in our learning abilities, our way of thinking, and--interpersonal relationships."

The desks that were *chabudais* at the start of our second year are now proper desks that were much better than the normal ones.

And I no longer hate myself for being so timid.

The interpersonal relationships i have now is far different from back then.

"To all the juniors in the school, what sort of changes will you go through when you graduate?"

Having went through so many changes in this one year, what awaits us in the next? I really can't imagine.

How will the enjoyable days we have now change at this moment next year--thinking about it alone is causing me to shiver in fear.

"The fruitful days always pass in the blink of an eye. I wish that all the juniors in this school will spend their remaining short days together with the friends they made...that is because the time you can have with your buddies now is very limited."

After hearing the last words from Kogure-senpai, I felt my heart wince.

"I have only a year left...to spend time together with everyone..."

I feel really unbearable, and invariably let out a whisper.

"Oh? Nothing happened."

"Yeah."

"Hm. I'd say it's best that nothing happened."

"...How anticlimactic."

Once the graduation ceremony ended peacefully, we're on our way back to the classroom.

Everyone was chatting away excitedly.

"Speaking of which, a graduation ceremony...we'll be the ones being sent off next year."

"What are you saying? Are you sure you'll be able to become a 3rd year, Aki?"

"She's right."

"You got to call us 'senpai' formally next year."

"...Arrogant of you to worry about graduation"

"I don't want you to tell me off like this, Muttsurini!"

Akihisa-kun and the others are chatting and teasing each other happily.

"..."

But I'm troubled by my negative thoughts, and I'm unable to smile like them.

"Hm? What's the matter, Himeji-san?"

"Mizuki, you're not feeling alright?"

Akihisa-kun and Minami-chan seemed to have noticed my situation as they ask me.

"Ah, no. I'm okay. It's just--"

"It's just?"

"After hearing the 3rd years, I suppose our lives from now on will have to change, and I'm feeling lonely..."

For me, every day now is so enjoyable, so satisfying.

I want to continue living every day as it is.

I don't want to change.

I want my current life to continue as it is.

If I can't have these wishes fulfilled, at the very least--

"--at the very least, I wish that I can continue to live on every day like this for the year until we graduate, I think..."

The part I hate most about myself appears in my heart.

I'm scared of the changes that will happen in the future.

I really feel uneasy about the future where everyone will walk on their own paths.

And when I show this side of me that I really hate--

"Ahaha, what are you saying, Himeji-san?"

Akihisa-kun simply laughs off my words, seemingly teasing me. Eh...?

"Yeah. I don't want to be in the same class as this idiot and suffer the same treatment."

"It would be troublesome to have Ironman as the homeroom teacher for another year."

"...I want a change of homeroom teacher."

"But seriously, you guys, you should think of changing your lifestyles."

Sakamoto-kun and the others don't seem to be worried in the slightest. Why!? I'm so worried that I'm uneasy."

"...Why--"

""""Hm?""""

"Why is everyone not worried at all? Maybe that's all the time we will have left, right!?"

I can no longer hold in my emotions, and before I know it, my voice became loud.

It's because I'm feeling so happy now that I'm scared of those times ending.

We may be streamed into different classes once we head into our third years, and everyone will be on their different paths after they graduate. While we continue to enjoy every day together, we'll soon be in different classrooms, and we'll be far away from each other.

A year later, we'll be on our different paths, and we'll be drifting away from each other.

For me, such a future is really horrifying.

"I wish for...things to remain like this...not change at all..."

This is the heartfelt wish that had been lingering in my heart recently.

While I reveal my thoughts Akihisa-kun gives me a dumbfounded look, saying,

"I say, Himeji-san."

"...Yes?"

"If things aren't going to change as it is, there won't be happier things happening, right?"

"...Eh...?"

Looking at his dumbfounded look, I'm starting to wonder if he had understood my words.

"Th-that's--!"

Just when my tone got agitated.

"Yoshii, Sakamoto! This is bad!"

Our classmate Fukumura-kun dashed out from the classroom, panting as he arrived in front of us.

"What's the matter?"

"Those guys were being so quiet during the graduation ceremony, but they set a trap here!"

Fukumura-kun leads us to the 3-A classroom that is now ours.

And over there is--

"To everyone in 2-F, this is our disdain and mocking. ~Everyone in 3-A~"

Placed neatly in the middle of the classroom is the card and the intriguing flower called the Rafflesia giving off a foul stench.

"It stinks! The lack of ventilation is causing the stench to remain here!!"

"Speaking of which, how did those bastards get such a flower!?"

"Why are you being so amazing in such a useless situation...!"

"""THOSE BASTARDS!!!"""

Akihisa-kun and the others roar in perfect unison.

And as for me, I could only widen my eyes, unable to understand what was going on.

"The plotters of this idea's definitely the TokoNatsu pair."

"Those shitty bastards...! They want a piece of us even at the very end...!"

"Fine by me! Gouge out their hearts along with their second buttons!"

"...Today shall be their death anniversary."

"You guys! Split into 6 pursuit teams!! Don't let those 3rd years scoundrels back alive!"

""""Understood!""""

I remain perturbed, and everyone's passing by in front of me, sprinting out of the classroom.

And right when Akihisa-kun's about to leave the classroom too--

"Ah, yeah, Himeji-san."

He stopped in front of me.

"Eh? Ah, yes."

I blankly answered.

"As for what we were talking about."

Akihisa-kun doesn't seem to be mind as he continues,

"I believe the me next year will get along better with everyone else. We'll have better experiences than before, and we'll enjoy each day better than before."

Once Akihisa-kun said that, he showed me the smile I loved most, the one that would energize me as I look at it--

"Just like how my relationship with you changed from the start of our second year until now."

He gave me those magical words, and sweeps my uneasiness aside.

"Ah..."

My heart's gradually warmed.

It's as Akihisa-kun said. If there's no change, I won't be on such good terms with him, and it won't be better than how it is now. I won't be able to look forward to the moments more wonderful than they are now."

Once we enter our third years, we will enjoy our school lives differently from before. We can experience the school festival and sports meet that can only be done with everyone.

Once we graduate, we'll have much more things to do. We can go to many different places with everyone, drive off for distant journeys, or go on overseas trips during our long vacations.

We're happy now, but this might not be the happiest moments. As we grow, we'll have more things we can do, and we can find enjoyment more than we have now. Because...if this is more enjoyable than last year, the next year will definitely be more enjoyable.

"Akihisa-kun..."

"Hm? What is it, Himeji-san?"

Akihisa-kun didn't look any different form before. He doesn't look like he has something specific to talk about.

He's always like this. When we first met, he'll say things like 'this won't happen', to shake off the part I hate in my heart. While I continue to be fearful and tentative, he's always giving me the power of enthusiasm to move forward.

"Hey! Let's go, Akihisa!"

"Got it!"

Sakamoto-kun prompted, and Akihisa-kun again moves to the exit.

"Akihisa-kun."

I called him.

"Hm? What is it?"

While my mind's filled with all kinds of emotions--

"It's really great...that I fell in love with you."

"HUH!?"

Before I know it, I blurt out these words that can't be held back.

"Eh-eh, erm...anyway, we'll talk later."

Akihisa-kun continues to flail his arms flustered as he chases after everyone and exits the classroom.

Upon seeing his cute self, I naturally show a smile.

"...Mizuki."

Minami-chan's voice came from beside me.

"Ah, yes. What is it, Minami-chan?"

"What you just said is against the school rules, you know?"

Minami-chan's eyes are giving me the 'You're pulling a fast one' look.

"Well, erm...I'm sorry."

"I forgive you."

"But..."

"Hm?"

"That wasn't a confession, but my feelings, so it's fine, right?"

"...You've gotten real good at talking your way out of things."

Good grief. Minami-chan shrugs her shoulders,

"Well, those idiots have run off. Let's not look at this weird flower and head off to where Shouko is, okay?"

"Yes, let's do it."

I proceed out of the classroom along with Minami-chan.

"YOSHII! TELL US WHAT SHE JUST SAID TO YOU!"

"WE OF THE FFF INQUISITION WILL NEVER FORGIVE ANY HERETICS AT ANY GIVEN TIME!"

"Th-the third years after more important now, right--HIII!!"

The noise came from somewhere; it's interesting, just like our school.

Author's Notes

- This afterword contains materials from the main text. To those readers who have yet to read the main text, please be warned.

Thank you very much for purchasing this work. This is the author Inoue Kenji.

I've kept you waiting! It's been more than a year since volume 12 was sold, and I finally managed to sell the short story collection. Thank you very much to all who were waiting patiently, sending letters of encouragement, Valentine's chocolates and the handmade cardset from Hiraga-kun. I've been keeping all the presents carefully. And sorry to keep all of you waiting for so long!

Actually, during the past year or so, I've been thinking of what to do for my new work, and the I understand...what I write always end up with Akihisa and the other F class members as the basis of them, and I'm not in the mood for writing other stories. Even after thinking of a few stories, the story will typically end up as 'if this OO is done by Akihisa and the others". For example "If Akihisa and the others are to become thieves", or "If Akihisa and the others have to work in a job that takes them all over the world" and such. In any case, I love them too much.

Right now, I have an initial draft of 'Baka Test' with me, completed April 13th, 2005. In other words, it's been about 10 years since they started living in my head. Thinking about it, I spent quite a long time with them.

I'm really thinking of going through the details on how different they are now from how they were back then, but as usual, I don't have enough pages, so I'll just touch on it a little.

About the previous lives (?) mentioned between the short stories, even I do feel that Minami's background is too tragic. Her previous self is the current Sugawa-kun. She wasn't crushed by that predicament, and ends up like this, which I find

is really amazing. However, once her gender, face and position in the story has completely changed, she's a completely different person now.

Because it's because of her days growing up that Minami turned into an adorable character once she became a girl. She's the first to call Akihisa by his name, and the one who got his first kiss. The incident where she became attracted to Akihisa, and when she really loved him really elevated her to main heroine status. There are times when I wonder: Compared to Mizuki, is Minami more--no, it's nothing. On a side note, in a certain sense, Hideyoshi definitely is a character who changed into a female. The decisive blow was Haga-san's illustrations, so I have no shame about that. I still remember the first time I was shown the character illustrations, and I earnestly begged the editor-in-charge, "Please make this kid a girl!". Those are wonderful memories, though I was rebuffed in the end.

And so, the pages are running out as I continue on. Though I keep thinking of writing the nonsensical little stories like before, it's a pity. I didn't get to write them in volume 12 either…!

So now, I'll go directly into the customary thanks.

Haga-san the illustrator, thank you very much for providing such cool and cute illustrations. The spread illustration this time is really amazing! Thinking of the journey that started from the initial setting till now, I'm really moved. It's been a joy to work along with you!

For the editor-in-charge K-sama, I received some messages you sent from the office on Sunday night, and that's when I truly appreciate the hard work you put in. I'm really sorry...thanks to you, this book is finally complete! Thank you for everything till this point. Please continue to take care of me from now on!

To the designer Kaguya-san and proofreader O-san, and so many that are involved, I'll like to truly express my thanks here. Without your efforts, this book will never be published.

And also, the indispensable readers! I hope everyone can continue to support and love Akihisa and the others. The encounter with everyone is the greatest treasure to me. I really think that it's great that I'm able to write such a story. Thank you very much.

Finally, a little promotion. As I mentioned before, I intend to write a story of happy, whacky high school students' hijinks for my next work. The plan is that it'll be mainly about comedy outside school.

And also, I'm writing writing a manga titled 'Grand Blue' for 'Good Afternoon' manga label. If I have to describe this work in one line, it's a story of 'how will the F class guys look like when they're in college'. If you're interested, I'll be glad if you can browse through this work.

That is it for now! I will like to give everyone my utmost thanks

~Inoue Kenji~

あとがき。

葉賀。

ひさびさの短編集、いかがでしたか？
自分もひさびさにFクラスの連中を描けて
楽しかったです！

And so, in Spring--

The first Spring arrives, after I decided to attend this Fumitzuki Gakuen.

The sakura along the sides of the path leading to school are blooming vibrantly, seemingly welcoming our arrivals passionately. I'm not one who really like elegance, but such a scene certainly is riveting.

But this is merely a fleeting moment.

The scene appearing in my mind right now is the scene of Spring, but it is not about the sakura.

Inside my mind right now is my new phase of life, my high school life.

"Kubo-kun, we're in the same class again!"

"Looks that way, Tsuchiya-san."

It was when I entered school.

I saw the class register indicated on the notice board, and went to my classroom, finding a girl from my middle school--Tsuchiya Hinata-san.

"We're in F class. Are my entry grades that bad…?"

Tsuchiya-san nervous mutters this. She's probably worried about her studies in the future.

"Tsuchiya-san, we're only streamed based on our grades in our 2nd year. Us first

years aren't streamed according to our grades now, so don't worry."

"Ah, is that so?"

Tsuchiya-san gives a cheerful 'I forgot' smile as she says this.

"And besides, if we're streamed based on our grades, it's impossible for you to be in F class!"

"...I have nothing to say to that."

Regarding my learning aptitude, I do feel that my grades are decent. Grade-wise, I do feel that there is a very low possibility of me being streamed into F class I suppose.

--However,

"My older brother mentioned that I might be suited to be in F class…"

"Eh? Why? What did he say?"

"No. It's nothing much."

My smart older brother said that, and even if I want to deny it directly, I can't shake off the uneasiness inside me.

But I'm not joking here! Till this point, I've been upright and moral, and I plan to continue being like this! I won't accept such a critique happily!

"Hm? What's the matter, Kubo-kun? You're looking rather scary there."

"Ah, it's nothing. I just made a decision that from now on, I'm going to live an honest, peaceful, upright school life."

"Ahaha. You're really strange, showing such a scary face because of that."

Tsuchiya-san again shows a bright smile. It's good that she's able to be happy, but I'm a little unhappy to be told by her that I'm a little weird.

How do I explain this to her? While I'm racking my brain.

"By the way, have you heard about the rumors regarding the 3rd years?"

"Yeah, the ones about the amazing senior, right?"

"I heard that there's a bunch of them who are treated specially not only by the juniors, but even the teachers."

I can hear some chatter from a group of guys, probably from the same middle school.

Tsuchiya-san beside me hears these words too, and she stares at my face, asking,

"Kubo-kun, do you know of these amazing 3rd years?"

"Who knows...even I want to ask."

Besides, I only have an older brother who's in his 3rd year, and I don't know any other acquaintance. If I really have to mention, I only did interact with the upperclassmen when I visited the school the last time.

"There is a senior who can use many different voices, and is an expert at both makeup and acting. That senior looks like either a guy or a girl here, and is really able to manipulate boys with some breathtaking beauty."

"Really? That's amazing."

"But if there's such a sexy senior, I really want to have a look."

There's such an upperclassman? It's true that I met many pretty girls when I visited the school, so maybe there's such a beauty amongst them.

"There's also a senior who acts like an elite agent, capable of eavesdropping and doing hidden camerawork. It's said that there's nothing he can't investigate."

"Ah, I heard of that too. It's said that whenever that senior is, blood's often left in his wake."

"Is that where he silences those interfering in his investigations...is he a ninja awakened in the modern times…"

Hearing them speak, I don't think they're describing a high school student, but the saying goes: where there's smoke, there's fire. Even if it's not that ridiculous, it's likely that he's a dangerous guy whose blade is clean one moment and blood-soaked in another. I better be on my guard.

"There's also a senior who's so strong he's called the Asura. It's said that it's normal for him to be drugged, tasered, handcuffed, abducted or jailed."

"Is this some fighting manga for the Showa Era? It's scary…"

"Mustn't go against him here…"

I knew from before that the discipline in this school is a little poor, but I never thought it would be this dangerous...better to be safe than sorry though. Better pay attention to this upperclassman.

"These really do sound like dangerous stuff, Kubo-kun."

"I suppose. You should be a little careful too, Tsuchiya-san."

I got to ask my older brother about these dangerous people. If I'm not careful, I'll end up getting too close to them.

"And the most amazing of them all is that guy! He wrecked the school 3 times, beat a teacher so bad he knocked him out, incited all the boys in his year and got them all suspended, and he started all sorts of trouble here!"

"Ah yeah! Is it that guy who's called the first 'punishment inspector' since the opening of this school!?"

"He's just kept on probation? That's a real criminal here!"

"Be careful. That guy's rather dangerous."

"Yeah I heard. After all, that--"

""""Yoshii Akihisa-senpai!!""""

"Pfft!"

After hearing this name, I can't help but choke.

"Kubo-kun, are you alright?"

"Ah, yeah, I'm fine."

Tsuchiya-san looks at me worriedly, and I wave my hand to answer.

Ho-how many rumors were started by that guy…!? His infamy is worse than when I did my investigations.

"E-erm, can I bother you for a while?"

""""Hm?""""

I approach the boys that are chatting. Got to make sure what's real and what's not.

"That Yoshii-senpai you speak of. Is he really that dangerous?"

"I never met him, but what I said was the truth. That's what I heard from my club seniors."

"Me too."

"B-but, I don't think he's that bad…"

Once say that, they're give me a look a reverence.

"Eh…? Are you acquainted with that Yoshii-senpai…?"

"Y-you serious? Please help keep our chit-chat as a secret!"

"Please! We'll treat you to lunch next time!"

The boy put their hands together, giving me begging looks.

Th-this is bad…! If I don't deny it now, that honest, upright school life of mine will be for nothing…!

"That's not it! It's just that his name is similar to someone I know, I just mixed it up!"

"Eh? Ah, what? Don't scare me?"

"I have cold sweat all over my back now, you know?"

"And anyway, you don't look like you're the type to get involved with such scary people."

"Hahaha. That's what people tell me, the only good point I have."

While the 4 of us are laughing, I manage to calm things down. This is close...they'll be my classmates. If I have some strange stigma attached to me, it'll cause quite some problems with my future school life.

Feeling relieved, I heave a sigh. Suddenly, one of the trio turn his eyes behind me, saying,

"And anyway, that girl over there looks lonely when she has nobody talking to her, you know?"

Once they heard that line, the other two turn to look behind me.

"Such a cute girl. You were chatting away casually just now. Is she your girlfriend?"

"How nice~ I'm envious that you have a girlfriend."

They're probably referring to Tsuchiya-san. Well, we do talk a lot, but she's not my girlfriend.

And just when I'm thinking of denying this for Tsuchiya-san's sake.

"Kubo Yoshimitsu! You're really a heretic after all!"

"I have been watching you ever since you visited this school. This is the case after all!"

"The rules of the FFF inquisition! Don't you dare say that you forget that!"

Some cloaked men arrived. When did they?

"..."

"..."

"...Your acquaintances…?"

"No, I think they're mistaken."

"But they're calling you by your name…"

"They're obviously talking to you…"

"Wait! Don't pull your distance from me like that! It's a misunderstanding!"

"Kubo Yoshimitsu! Come with us to the execution grounds--no, class #-F!"

"We shall execute you if you admit to having a girlfriend, and if you deny it, we shall torture you until you admit it!"

"""...(backs away)"""

"I said it's a misunderstanding!"

I continue to shout, but it's useless. The misunderstanding is getting worse. The cloaked men are dragging me by the arms.

At this moment,

"Kubo-kun's little brother, watch out!"

A boy runs in, kicking away the ones restraining me.

Th-this guy is…!

"Are you alright, Kubo-kun's little brother?"

I can never forget the guy who put my family in peril, that guy called Yoshii Akihisa.

"Y-you bastard…!"

"First class heretic Yoshii Akihisa…!"

The cloaked guys who were kicked away groan as they mention this name. Th-this is bad! If they mention this name now…!

"Eh? Yoshii...eh? Eh?"

"This name, is it that senior…?"

"Seeeii!"

"Gabu!"

To prevent the cloaked guy from saying anything more than that, I proceed to knock him out. I'm sorry, but this is for my self-preservation. Please forgive me.

"Ah, Yoshii-senpai. Hello there!"

"Ahh, Muttsu--no, Tsuchiya Hinata-san, it's been a while."

And my efforts were crushed by Tsuchiya-san's one single line.

"Yoshii Akihia, there's no doubt it's him, right…!"

"That guy's the one in the rumors…!"

Everyone is now confident that this guy's Yoshii Akihisa. The proof is that they're all putting all their strength in their limbs, ready to run away at any given moment.

In that case, I can only act accordingly.

"Thank you very much, stranger. You saved me there."

"What are you saying, Kubo Yoshimitsu-kun? It's not like we're strangers here."

"""...(Swoosh)."""

The classmates I met on this very first day at school are now pulling their distances from us. Wait! We're not on that good terms.

"You better be careful, Kubo-kun's little brother. This school's now very sensitive about the BGR issue. The FFF inquisition is now going all out in their investigations and destruction, acting like members of the discipline council--watch out!"

While saying this, Yoshii-senpai pulls my arm hard.

Following that is the dangerous, buzzing sound of what sounds like a taser, grazing my shoulder.

"Yeargh! What is this!?"

"The original 2-F guys!"

"We sense...some heretics…"

"Capture...and execute…"

"No, those guys aren't human now, are they?"

Why are they swaying about from side to side as they approach? Why can they attack people with tasers without hesitation? I get the feeling that my common sense from before is completely useless here.

"Everyone listen, it's a misunderstanding! I don't have a girlfriend, and I'm not on that good terms with Yoshii-senpai--"

"Leave the talk for later! Gotta run!"

"Eh, ah--wait!?"

I'm dragged by the arm by Yoshii-senpai, and we proceed to dash out of

classroom 1-F.

"...That guy's name is Kubo, right…?"

"Not sure, but the ones he know are really shady…"

"Think we better be wary of people like him too…"

I can hear such chatter from my classrooms, and it appears my ideal school life is gradually becoming distant from me.

"Phew...I guess we're safe here"

Yoshii-senpai drags me to this old school roof, the lingering frigid winds bellowing away. We're resting here.

"Why did I, end up, in such…"

I'm wheezing, panting furiously, as I utter these words.

And Yoshii-senpai continues to look nonchalant, not looking tired at all.

"They're hunting couples. You see, our school forbids having Boy-Girl Relations."

"I don't care, about couples, or whatnot. I, don't have, a, girlfriend."

"Do you think those guys will care about those words?"

"..."

Now that he mentions it, I only did talk to Tsuchiya-san for just a bit when we visited the school the last time, and I was tied to the execution platform.

"Haa...this school really is a little weird…"

Having finally regained my breath, I cough out loud, complaining.

And then, Yoshii-senpai answers with the attitude of 'too late now', and says,

"Ahaha, I can't deny that."

"Well, I did mentally prepare myself somewhat before I entered this school…"

Or rather, it might be said that I chose to attend this school because I got some objectives to deal with in this school.

"Speaking of which, Kubo-kun's little brother."

"...Please just call me Yoshimitsu."

I do find this too roundabout a way to call me, so I decide to make this clear first.

"Then, Yoshimitsu-kun, why did you choose this school?"

Maybe Yoshii-senpai is feeling suspicious about that conversation just now, and he asks this question.

"Well, it's close to home, so that's one of the reasons I suppose. And most importantly--"

"Most importantly?"

"--I want to deny what my brother said."

Brother once told me before that 'you have the same way of thinking as the people of F class'. That's rich. Since you say that I'm of F class level, I'll enter this school and prove to you that this isn't the case!

But even so, I don't want to go through with how it all started, so I decide not to talk about this anymore.

But Yoshii-senpai seems convinced by these words.

"Is that so?"

He vindicated me. It's like he understood what I was trying to get at with these words alone. Why? I don't think I get on well with him, but in this sense...he's somewhat sharp.

"...Is it strange?"

"No, that's not it. I think that if you have different insistence and thinking, you should continue discussing until both sides agree to it, even if it's someone close to you."

"..."

"Hm? What's the matter, Yoshimitsu-kun?"

"No, it's nothing. I never thought you would say such things."

This guy has the appearance of a pessimist, but he's unexpectedly so clear-minded about such stuff...I'm a little surprised.

"The School Opening Ceremony will be held at 2pm. All classes from class 1-A, please enter the gym in order. I repeat, the school opening ceremony will be held at 2pm--"

The audio speakers installed on the roof being to broadcast to the entire school.

"Oh, the opening ceremony's about to begin. Got to get back."

"Yeah."

Both of us remain wary out our surroundings as we head back into the building.

I'm the same too, Yoshimitsu-kun."

"Eh?"

"Kubo-kun--your brother--he's my friend, but I can't deny that what he said is all correct."

"Yoshii-senpai, this is…"

"So, Yoshimitsu-kun. I'll lend you a hand. Let's work together and change the wrong thinking of those guys."

Yoshii-senpai reaches his hand out.

...Yeah. this guy's always tagged with many labels he didn't want to, and he's always working hard. 'Biggest idiot in school', 'problem kid', 'punishment inspector'. Nobody would have wanted to accept such labels. That's why he understands how I feel, and validates my thinking.

Thinking about this, I unconsciously reach towards Yoshii-senpai's outstretched right hand--

"Please take care of me."

And I grasp his hand.

"...That shall be all."

The pretty, black-hair girl I saw during the school visit finishes with her welcome speech to the freshmen, and descends the podium steps.

"Thank you, 3rd year valedictorian Kirishima Shouko-san for your speech. We, we shall have added explanation from the newly assembled 'student council that is meant to ensure safety'."

Once the broadcast's made, a crass looking, muscular upperclassman with short hair and--my brother appear on the podium. Eh? I do remember that my brother isn't in any disciplinary council stuff…

"I'm the president of the disciplinary council, Sakamoto Yuuji of class 3-A. I will like to welcome all freshmen, and at the same time, I shall explain some particular issues to take note of. This is--"

"Vice president of the disciplinary council, Kubo Toshimitsu class 3-A. Please take care of me."

Brother proceeds to bow in response to Sakamoto-senpai's introduction. What is the disciplinary student council about…?

"Our school has a rule that 'forbids students from being in love'."

"This rule is set so that everyone can understand 'a student's responsibility is to continue working hard, and not forget to study', based on the nature of this being a prep school. The objective isn't to limit the freedom that forbids love."

Brother's words do make me a little worried. The stated objective looks noble, but well...both Sakamoto-senpai and brother look like they're hiding their true feelings.

"Our disciplinary council is established to expose those that break the rules, and need to be corrected--"

While Sakamoto-senpai continues with the ideals of this so-called student council disciplinary committee--

"Wait a second--!!"

""""!?""""

A familiar voice echoes in the gym.

"...so you came, Akihisa."""""

"...Yoshii-kun."""""

Sakamoto-senpai and brother both show different reactions to this intruder.

Yoshii-senpai ignore their reactions as he points at the duo on the podium, yelling,

"I won't agree to this rule!"

Yoshii-senpai triumphant raises the flag of rebellion in the face of the seemingly

stifling disciplinary council.

But I don't know if there's some deal going on in the shadows, since while some students would normally agree to these words, there's no one voicing out now.

Sakamoto-senpai, standing on the podium, appears to be delighted by this as he smirks, telling Yoshii-senpai,

"Don't be ridiculous. None of us will be on your side. No matter how you shout alone--"

"I do have an ally!"

Yoshii-senpai's vigorous voice of belief causes Sakamoto-senpai to be quiet.

"...Oh?"

Once he heard that, Sakamoto-senpai then raises an eyebrow.

"Yuuji, no matter what kind of dirty means you use to drag Himeji-san and Kirishima-san along...there is still justice willing to stop evil!"

I can't follow what he's getting at, but it looks like something troublesome is about to happen again. Seriously, these guys…

"Come on, let's stand together and beat down this barbaric student council!"

Flabbergasted, I watch their conversation proceed. Yoshii-senpai then turn to me with determined eyes, loudly declaring,

"Right now, I shall request a summoning battle against the disciplinary council--with the freshman Kubo Yoshimitsu-kun!"

"WHAATTT!?"

I yell maniacally.

"Interesting. Bring it, Akihisa. Let's see how much your strength can stand

against me."

"How can I possibly lose to you…! We'll definitely win and prove that your ideas are wrong!"

This isn't it! This isn't what I want to deny! He looked like he understood, but he doesn't understand anything at all!

Se-seriously, that guy…!

"How stupid can you be--!"

"W-wait, looks like that guy's Kubo Yoshimitsu…"

"He's paired in a summoning battle with that Yoshii-senpai once school starts. This is amazing..."!"

"Is that the legendary will of F class…!"

Everyone's giving me intrigued or terrified looks here. Yo-you got to be kidding me! Why is it that I'm getting such looks when I'm trying to deny that F class is full of idiots!

"Yoshii-senpai, please stop! Don't get me involved in this--"

"It's fine, Yoshimitsu-kun! A first year can summon too! I'll teach you how to do it! You don't have to worry!"

That isn't it! That isn't it, senpai!

"Let's begin, Yuuji."

"Got it, Akihisa."

""--Summon!""

Yoshii-senpai and Sakamoto-senpai's voice echo as they call out their summoned beasts. Th-these guys--

"These guys don't seem to have matured even though they're now third years!?"

""Take this!!!!!""

Before I realize it, the gym's in chaos, like a hornets' nest was disturbed. These guys will remain like this even until their graduation. I'm sure of it.

"Kubo-kun, Kubo-kun."

Tsuchiya-san approaches me without me knowing, and tugs at my sleeve.

"It looks like every day in this school will be enjoyable."

After seeing her smile as she says this, I'm left unable to say anything.

I don't know whether it'll be fun every day.

But I dare say.

"Alright, Yuuji! Let's settle this today!"

"Don't kid me, Akihisa! How can you best me by yourself?"

It's likely that those upperclassmen will continue on with such days.

Notes